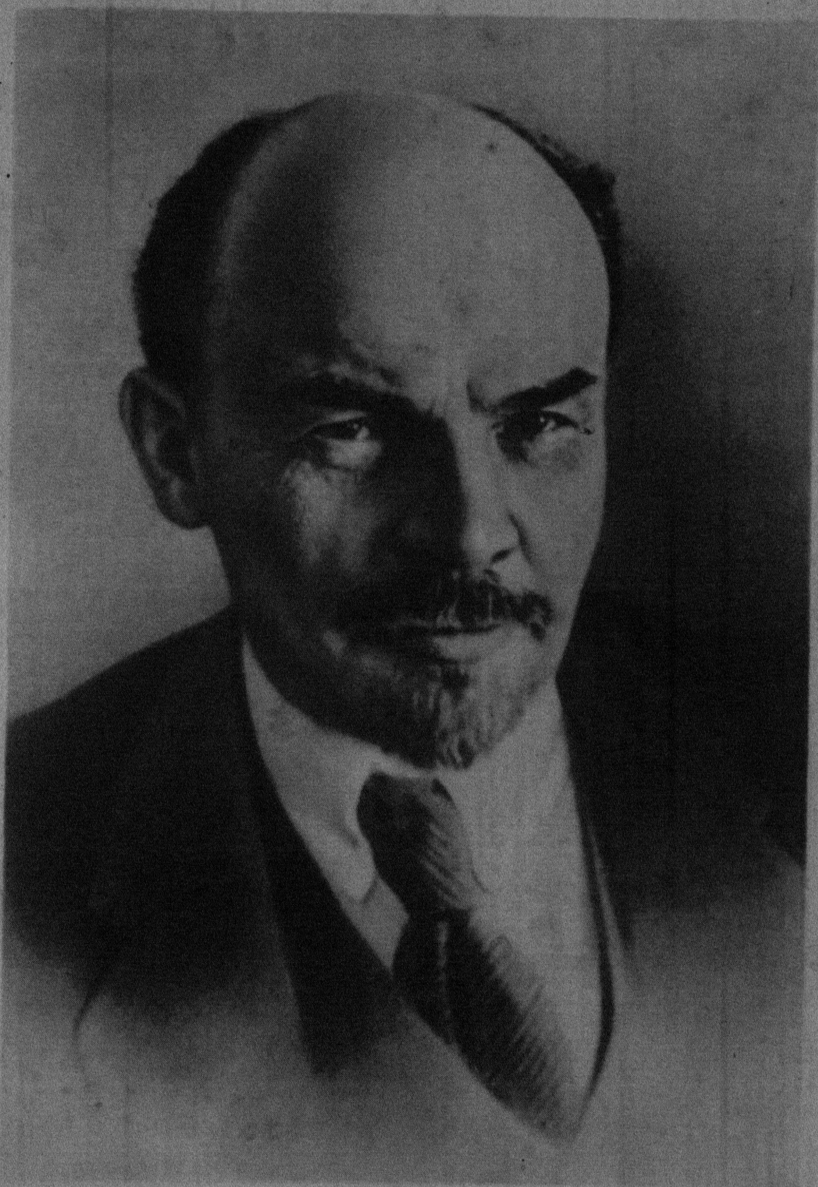


LENIN



V. I. LENIN  
1918



WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE

V.I. LENIN  
SELECTED WORKS  
IN THREE VOLUMES

2



ИНСТИТУТ МАРКСИЗМА - ЛЕНИНИЗМА при ЦК КПСС

# В.И. ЛЕНИН

ИЗБРАННЫЕ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯ

В ТРЕХ ТОМАХ

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

МОСКВА

---

# V. I. LENIN

**SELECTED WORKS**

**IN THREE VOLUMES**

**2**

**RETROCONVERTED**  
**B C & C L**



**PROGRESS PUBLISHERS**

**MOSCOW**

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The translations are taken from the English edition of V I Lenin's *Collected Works* prepared by Progress Publishers, Moscow

Changes have been made in accordance with the 5th Russian edition of the *Collected Works*

В И Л Ы Н И Н

ИЗБРАННЫЕ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯ

В трех томах

том 2

*На английском языке*

*Printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*

Л  $\frac{10102-220}{014(01)-77}$  - без объявл

## CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Preface</i> . . . . .	13
LETTERS FROM AFAR. First Letter. The First Stage of the First Revolution . . . . .	19
THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION . . . . .	29
Theses . . . . .	29
THE DUAL POWER . . . . .	34
THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION. <i>Draft</i>	
<i>Platform for the Proletarian Party</i> . . . . .	37
The Class Character of the Revolution That Has Taken Place . . . .	37
The Foreign Policy of the New Government . . . . .	38
The Peculiar Nature of the Dual Power and Its Class Significance . .	39
The Peculiar Nature of the Tactics Which Follow from the Above . .	42
Revolutionary Defencism and Its Class Significance . . . . .	43
How Can the War Be Ended? . . . . .	45
A New Type of State Emerging from Our Revolution . . . . .	46
The Agrarian and National Programmes . . . . .	48
Nationalisation of the Banks and Capitalist Syndicates . . . . .	50
The Situation Within the Socialist International . . . . .	51
The Collapse of the Zimmerwald International.—The Need for Founding a Third International . . . . .	56
What Should Be the Name of Our Party—One That Will Be Correct Scientifically and Help to Clarify the Mind of the Proletariat Politically? . . . . .	59
Postscript . . . . .	63
THE SEVENTH (APRIL) ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) April 24-29 (May 7-12), 1917 . . . . .	66
1. Speech Delivered at the Opening of the Conference, April 24 (May 7)	66
2. Report on the Current Situation, April 24 (May 7). <i>Minutes</i> . . . .	67
3. Speech Winding Up the Debate on the Report on the Current Situation, April 24 (May 7) . . . . .	80
4. Speech in Favour of the Resolution on the War. April 27 (May 10). <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	82
5. Resolution on the War . . . . .	92
I . . . . .	92

II . . . . .	93
III . . . . .	94
6. Resolution on the Attitude Towards the Provisional Government . . . . .	95
7. Resolution on the Question of Revising the Party Programme . . . . .	96
8. Report on the Agrarian Question, April 28 (May 11). <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	97
9. Resolution on the Agrarian Question . . . . .	101
10. Resolution on the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies . . . . .	104
11. Speech on the National Question, April 29 (May 12). <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	105
12. Resolution on the National Question . . . . .	109
13. Resolution on the Current Situation . . . . .	111
INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SEVENTH (APRIL) ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) . . . . .	114
<i>FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES, June 3-24 (June 16-July 7), 1917</i> . . . . .	117
Speech on the Attitude Towards the Provisional Government, June 4 (17) . . . . .	117
THE EIGHTEENTH OF JUNE . . . . .	127
WHAT COULD THE CADETS HAVE COUNTED ON WHEN THEY WITHDREW FROM THE CABINET? . . . . .	130
WHERE IS STATE POWER AND WHERE IS COUNTER-REVOLU- TION? . . . . .	132
THREE CRISES . . . . .	137
THE QUESTION OF THE BOISHEVIK LEADERS APPEARING IN COURT . . . . .	141
THE POLITICAL SITUATION ( <i>Four Theses</i> ) . . . . .	143
LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF <i>PROLETARSKOYE DYELO</i> . . . . .	146
ON SLOGANS . . . . .	148
LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION . . . . .	155
I . . . . .	155
II . . . . .	157
III . . . . .	157
IV . . . . .	159
V . . . . .	159
VI . . . . .	161
VII . . . . .	164
VIII . . . . .	165
IX . . . . .	166
Afterword . . . . .	167
TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P. . . . .	168
ON COMPROMISES . . . . .	171
DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION . . . . .	176
THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO COMBAT IT . . . . .	182
Famine Is Approaching . . . . .	182
Complete Government Inactivity . . . . .	184
Control Measures Are Known to All and Easy to Take . . . . .	186
Nationalisation of the Banks . . . . .	188

Nationalisation of the Syndicates . . . . .	193
Abolition of Commercial Secrecy . . . . .	195
Compulsory Association . . . . .	199
Regulation of Consumption . . . . .	201
Government Disruption of the Work of the Democratic Organisations . . . . .	204
Financial Collapse and Measures to Combat It . . . . .	207
Can We Go Forward if We Fear to Advance Towards Socialism? . . . . .	210
The Struggle Against Economic Chaos—and the War . . . . .	213
The Revolutionary Democrats and the Revolutionary Proletariat . . . . .	216
ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION . . . . .	219
THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR. <i>They Are Trying to Frighten Us With Civil War</i> . . . . .	226
THE STATE AND REVOLUTION. <i>The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution</i> . . . . .	238
Preface to the First Edition . . . . .	238
Preface to the Second Edition . . . . .	239
Chapter I. <i>Class Society and the State</i> . . . . .	240
1. The State—a Product of the Irreconcilability of Class Antagonisms . . . . .	240
2. Special Bodies of Armed Men, Prisons, etc. . . . .	243
3. The State—an Instrument for the Exploitation of the Oppressed Class . . . . .	245
4. The “Withering Away” of the State, and Violent Revolution . . . . .	248
Chapter II. <i>The State and Revolution. The Experience of 1848-51</i> . . . . .	253
1. The Eve of the Revolution . . . . .	253
2. The Revolution Summed Up . . . . .	256
3. The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852 . . . . .	261
Chapter III. <i>The State and Revolution. Experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. Marx's Analysis</i> . . . . .	263
1. What Made the Communards' Attempt Heroic? . . . . .	263
2. What Is to Replace the Smashed State Machine? . . . . .	266
3. Abolition of Parliamentarism . . . . .	270
4. Organisation of National Unity . . . . .	274
5. Abolition of the Parasite State . . . . .	276
Chapter IV. <i>Continuation. Supplementary Explanations by Engels</i> . . . . .	278
1. The Housing Question . . . . .	278
2. Controversy with the Anarchists . . . . .	281
3. Letter to Bebel . . . . .	284
4. Criticism of the Draft of the Erfurt Programme . . . . .	286
5. The 1891 Preface to Marx's <i>The Civil War in France</i> . . . . .	292
6. Engels on the Overcoming of Democracy . . . . .	296
Chapter V. <i>The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State</i> . . . . .	298
1. Presentation of the Question by Marx . . . . .	298
2. The Transition from Capitalism to Communism . . . . .	300
3. The First Phase of Communist Society . . . . .	304
4. The Higher Phase of Communist Society . . . . .	307
Chapter VI. <i>The Vulgarisation of Marxism by the Opportunists</i> . . . . .	313
1. Plekhanov's Controversy with the Anarchists . . . . .	313
2. Kautsky's Controversy with the Opportunists . . . . .	314
3. Kautsky's Controversy with Pannekoek . . . . .	320
Postscript to the First Edition . . . . .	327
THE BOLSHEVIKS MUST ASSUME POWER. <i>A Letter to the Central Committee and the Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)</i> . . . . .	328

MARXISM AND INSURRECTION. <i>A Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)</i> . . . . .	331
FROM A PUBLICIST'S DIARY. <i>The Mistakes of Our Party</i> . . . . .	336
THE CRISIS HAS MATURED . . . . .	342
I . . . . .	342
II . . . . .	343
III . . . . .	345
IV . . . . .	347
V . . . . .	347
VI . . . . .	348
CAN THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER? . . . . .	351
Foreword to the Second Edition . . . . .	351
Afterword . . . . .	386
LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE MOSCOW AND PETROGRAD COMMITTEES AND THE BOLSHEVIK MEMBERS OF THE PETROGRAD AND MOSCOW SOVIETS . . . . .	391
ADVICE OF AN ONLOOKER . . . . .	393
LETTER TO THE BOLSHEVIK COMRADES ATTENDING THE CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF THE NORTHERN REGION . . . . .	395
MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.), October 10 (23), 1917 . . . . .	401
1. Report. <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	401
2. Resolution . . . . .	402
MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.), October 16 (29), 1917 . . . . .	403
1. Report. <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	403
2. Speeches in Discussion. <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	404
1 . . . . .	404
2 . . . . .	404
3 . . . . .	405
3. Resolution . . . . .	405
LETTER TO BOLSHEVIK PARTY MEMBERS . . . . .	406
LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) . . . . .	410
LETTER TO Y. M. SVERDLOV, October 22 or 23, 1917 . . . . .	414
LETTER TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS . . . . .	415
TO THE CITIZENS OF RUSSIA! . . . . .	417
SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES, October 25-26 (November 7-8), 1917 . . . . .	418
1. To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants! . . . . .	418
2. Report on Peace, October 26 (November 8) . . . . .	419
Decree on Peace . . . . .	419
3. Concluding Speech Following the Discussion on the Report on Peace, October 26 (November 8) . . . . .	423
4. Report on Land, October 26 (November 8) . . . . .	425
Decree on Land . . . . .	426
5. Decision to Form the Workers' and Peasants' Government . . . . .	429
DRAFT REGULATIONS ON WORKERS' CONTROL . . . . .	431



WIRELESS MESSAGE OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS, OCTOBER 30 (NOVEMBER 12), 1917 . . . . .	433
SPEECHES AT A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.I.P.(B.), November 1 (14), 1917. <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	434
1 . . . . .	434
2 . . . . .	434
3 . . . . .	434
RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) ON THE OPPOSITION WITHIN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 2 (15), 1917 . . . . .	435
ULTIMATUM FROM THE MAJORITY ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) TO THE MINORITY . . . . .	437
TO THE POPULATION . . . . .	439
REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM PEASANTS . . . . .	441
FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS). <i>To All Party Members and to All the Working Classes of Russia</i> . . . . .	443
THE EXTRAORDINARY ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES, November 10-25 (November 23-December 8), 1917 . . . . .	447
1. Draft Resolution . . . . .	447
2. Concluding Speech on the Agrarian Question, November 18 (December 1). <i>Newspaper Report</i> . . . . .	448
ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEASANTS. <i>A Letter to "Pravda"</i> . . . . .	450
SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, December 1 (14), 1917 . . . . .	453
Speech on the Question of Setting Up a Supreme Economic Council. <i>Newspaper Report</i> . . . . .	453
REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF PETROGRAD WORKERS AND THE TASKS OF THE WORKING CLASS DELIVERED AT A MEETING OF THE 'WORKERS' SECTION OF THE PETROGRAD SOVIET OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES, December 4 (17), 1917 <i>Newspaper Report</i> . . . . .	454
THESES ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY . . . . .	456
FOR BREAD AND PEACE . . . . .	460
SPEECH ON THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS DELIVERED AT A MEETING OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, December 14 (27), 1917. <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	461
DRAFT DECREE ON THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND ON MEASURES NECESSARY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION . . . . .	464
HOW TO ORGANISE COMPETITION? . . . . .	467
DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE . . . . .	475

DRAFT DECREE ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY . . . . .	478
ON THE HISTORY OF THE QUESTION OF THE UNFORTUNATE PEACE . . . . .	480
Theses on the Question of the Immediate Conclusion of a Separate and Annexationist Peace . . . . .	480
AFTERWORD TO THE THESES ON THE QUESTION OF THE IMMEDIATE CONCLUSION OF A SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE . . . . .	488
SPEECHES ON WAR AND PEACE AT A MEETING OF THE C.C. OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (B.), JANUARY 11 (24), 1918. <i>Minutes</i> . . . . .	490
1 . . . . .	490
2 . . . . .	492
3 . . . . .	492
<i>THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', SOLDIERS' AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES, January 10-18 (23-31), 1918 .</i>	493
Report on the Activities of the Council of People's Commissars, January 11 (24) . . . . .	493
DRAFT WIRELESS MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN REICH . . . . .	508
THE SOCIALIST FATHERLAND IS IN DANGER! . . . . .	509
POSITION OF THE C. C. OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (BOLSHEVIKS) ON THE QUESTION OF THE SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE . . . . .	511
A PAINFUL BUT NECESSARY LESSON . . . . .	514
DRAFT DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS ON THE EVACUATION OF THE GOVERNMENT . . . . .	518
STRANGE AND MONSTROUS . . . . .	519
<i>EXTRAORDINARY SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.), March 6-8, 1918 . . . . .</i>	526
1. Political Report of the Central Committee, March 7 . . . . .	526
2. Reply to the Debate on the Political Report of the Central Committee, March 8 . . . . .	544
3. Resolution on War and Peace . . . . .	550
4. Addendum to the Resolution on War and Peace, March 8 . . . . .	551
5. Report on the Review of the Programme and on Changing the Name of the Party, March 8 . . . . .	552
6. Resolution on Changing the Name of the Party and the Party Programme . . . . .	563
7. Resolution on the Refusal of the "Left Communists" to Be Members of the Central Committee . . . . .	564
THE CHIEF TASK OF OUR DAY . . . . .	565
<i>EXTRAORDINARY FOURTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS, March 14-16, 1918 . . . . .</i>	569
1. Report on Ratification of the Peace Treaty, March 14 . . . . .	569
2. Resolution on Ratification of the Brest Treaty . . . . .	584
THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT . . . . .	586
The International Position of the Russian Soviet Republic and the Fundamental Tasks of the Socialist Revolution . . . . .	586

The General Slogan of the Moment . . . . .	590
The New Phase of the Struggle Against the Bourgeoisie . . . . .	591
The Significance of the Struggle for Country-wide Accounting and Control . . . . .	598
Raising the Productivity of Labour . . . . .	601
The Organisation of Competition . . . . .	603
"Harmonious Organisation" and Dictatorship . . . . .	606
The Development of Soviet Organisation . . . . .	613
Conclusion. . . . .	616
DRAFT PLAN OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORK . . . . .	618
SIX THESES ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT . . . . .	620
"LEFT-WING" CHILDISHNESS AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS MENTALITY . . . . .	623
I. . . . .	623
II. . . . .	626
III. . . . .	629
IV. . . . .	635
V. . . . .	637
VI. . . . .	644
THESES ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION . . . . .	647
I. . . . .	647
II. . . . .	648
III. . . . .	648
IV. . . . .	649
V. . . . .	650
ON THE FAMINE. <i>A Letter to the Workers of Petrograd</i> . . . . .	651
SPEECH AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF ECONOMIC COUNCILS, May 26, 1918 . . . . .	658
COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT "REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONALISED ENTERPRISES" . . . . .	665
<i>FIFTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', SOLDIERS' AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES, July 4-10, 1918</i> . . . . .	666
Report of the Council of Peoples Commissars, July 5 . . . . .	666
SPEECH AT A MEETING IN PRESNYA DISTRICT, JULY 26, 1918 . . . . .	684
SPEECH AT A JOINT SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THE MOSCOW SOVIET, FACTORY COMMITTEES AND TRADE UNIONS OF MOSCOW, JULY 29, 1918 . . . . .	686
COMRADE WORKERS, FORWARD TO THE LAST, DECISIVE FIGHT! . . . . .	700
LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS . . . . .	704
<i>JOINT SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, THE MOSCOW SOVIET, FACTORY COMMITTEES AND TRADE UNIONS, October 22, 1918</i> . . . . .	716
Resolution . . . . .	716
THE VALUABLE ADMISSIONS OF PITIRIM SOROKIN . . . . .	718

<i>Notes</i> . . . . .	729
<i>Name Index</i> . . . . .	776
<i>Subject Index</i> . . . . .	800

## ILLUSTRATIONS

## V. I. Lenin, 1918

First page of the manuscript <i>The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It</i> , September 10-14 (23-27), 1917 . . . . .	183
First page of the manuscript <i>The State and Revolution</i> , August-September 1917 . . . . .	240-41
First page of the newspaper <i>Rabochy Put</i> No. 30, October 20 (7), 1917, in which Lenin's article "The Crisis Has Matured" was published . . . . .	344
Manuscript of the resolution written by Lenin and adopted at the meeting of the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), October 10 (23), 1917 . . . . .	400-01
First page of the manuscript of Lenin's "Theses on the Tasks of the Soviet Government in the Present Situation", April 1918 . . . . .	587
First page of the manuscript of Lenin's "Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work", April 18 . . . . .	619

---

## PREFACE

Volume Two of the *Selected Works* of V. I. Lenin includes works written during the period from March 1917 to November 1918. In them Lenin elaborates the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party in its struggle for the growing-over of the bourgeois-democratic into the socialist revolution, for the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution and for the establishment and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat during the early period of Soviet power. These writings deal with the most important questions of the Party's struggle for Russia's withdrawal from the imperialist war, of the creation of a new, Soviet state and the building of socialist society. The volume contains a number of documents and speeches by Lenin devoted to the defence of Soviet Russia in connection with the foreign military intervention and the Civil War.

The volume opens with the first of the five "Letters from Afar", which Lenin wrote in March 1917 while still in emigration and in which he assessed the character and the motive forces of the February revolution in Russia. Defining the tasks facing the working class and its party, Lenin wrote that only the first stage of the revolution had been accomplished. He called on the working class to display heroism and to ensure victory in the second stage of the revolution, in its growing-over into the socialist revolution.

Included in the volume are the famous April Theses—an outstanding programme document of the Bolshevik Party, with which Lenin came out on April 4 (17), 1917, the day after his return from abroad, the article "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution. Draft Platform for the Proletarian Party", Lenin's reports and speeches and the resolutions he drew up for the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the Bolsheviks. These programme documents armed the Party and the working

class of Russia with a scientifically substantiated plan for the transition from the bourgeois-democratic to the socialist revolution. The April Conference unanimously adopted Lenin's course for the socialist revolution and the conquest of political power by the working class and the poor peasantry embodied in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. After the Conference the Communist Party set to work to implement its decisions, to mobilise the masses for the revolution and to educate them politically.

The July events—the shooting of a peaceful demonstration of workers and soldiers in Petrograd on July 4 (17), 1917, by order of the Provisional Government constituted a turning point in the development of the revolution. The dual power was ended, all power in the country passed into the hands of the bourgeois Provisional Government.

The new political situation in the country required that the Party should alter its tactics and change its tactical slogans. In the theses "The Political Situation" and the article "On Slogans" Lenin explained that the peaceful period of the revolution was over, gave instructions that forces were to be gathered to prepare for the armed insurrection, and justified the need for temporary withdrawal of the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!"

These and other works by Lenin provided the basis for the decisions adopted by the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), which was held in Petrograd from July 26 to August 3 (Aug. 8-16), 1917. Lenin directed the work of the Congress from his hiding-place from which he had been guiding the activity of the Party and giving instructions on all the most important questions concerning the revolution. The resolutions adopted by the Sixth Congress were aimed at preparing the proletariat and the poor peasantry for the armed insurrection and for the victory of the socialist revolution.

During the 110 days he was in hiding Lenin wrote more than 65 books, articles and letters, among them such important works as *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, *The State and Revolution*, and *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, which are included in this volume. In them Lenin developed the Marxist teaching on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat, gave an all-round scientific substantiation of the historical necessity of the socialist revolution and its inevitability in Russia, and expounded its primary tasks.

In the middle of September 1917 Lenin wrote to the Central, Petrograd and Moscow Party Committees the letter "The Bolsheviks Must Assume Power", and to the Central Committee the letter "Marxism and Insurrection", in which, on the basis of a profound analysis of all aspects of the international and in-

ternal situation, he set the Party the task of preparing and organising an armed insurrection. In his letter "Marxism and Insurrection" and his article "Advice of an Onlooker" Lenin developed and summed up in a harmonious system the views of Marx and Engels on insurrection as an art, and drew up an approximate plan for organising an insurrection.

This volume includes documents of the historical sittings of the Central Committee held on October 10 (23) and 16 (29), 1917: the minutes of Lenin's reports and speeches and the resolutions which he wrote on the armed insurrection. The Central Committee's decision on the insurrection was a directive for the Party organisations throughout the country to prepare immediately for the armed insurrection. Published in this volume are "Letter to Bolshevik Party Members" and "Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)", in which Lenin exposed the anti-Party conduct of Zinoviev and Kamenev in opposing the Central Committee's decision on the armed insurrection. On October 18 (31) Kamenev published in the semi-Menshevik paper *Novaya Zhizn* a statement in his own name and that of Zinoviev, announcing their disagreement with that decision. By this very fact Zinoviev and Kamenev betrayed to the enemy the secret Party decision on the armed insurrection. Lenin branded them as strike-breakers of the revolution and demanded their expulsion from the Party.

Lenin insisted that the Bolsheviks should begin the insurrection before the Second Congress of Soviets so as to be ahead of the enemy, who were expecting an armed action on the opening day of the Congress. In his letter to the members of the Central Committee written on October 24 (November 6) Lenin proposed beginning the insurrection immediately: "History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything" (see p. 416).

On Lenin's suggestion the insurrection began on October 24 (November 6). Late in the evening Lenin arrived at the Smolny and assumed leadership of the insurrection. The plan which he had worked out for the insurrection was successfully carried out by the insurgent workers and soldiers. This volume contains the historic appeal "To the Citizens of Russia!" written by Lenin on behalf of the Revolutionary Military Committee and announcing to the peoples of Russia on the morning of October 25 (November 7) that the Provisional Government had been overthrown and state power had passed to the Soviets.

This volume also contains materials of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which

opened on the evening of October 25 (November 7). The Congress unanimously adopted the manifesto "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" written by Lenin, confirmed Lenin's decrees on peace and on land and set up a Soviet Government headed by Lenin.

The works printed in this volume reflect the gigantic work done by Lenin for building up the world's first Soviet socialist state and for strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, and his struggle for unity in the Communist Party.

The Soviet Republic could not consider its position consolidated so long as the country was in a state of war. Britain, France and the USA refused to take part in peace negotiations and therefore the Soviet Government found itself compelled to undertake separate peace talks with Germany. The German imperialists agreed to peace negotiations but presented predatory peace terms. "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", "Draft Wireless Message to the Government of the German Reich", "Position of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks) on the Question of the Separate and Annexationist Peace", "A Painful but Necessary Lesson", "Strange and Monstrous", "Speeches on War and Peace at a Meeting of the C.C. of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), January 11 (24), 1918", and the political report of the Central Committee at the Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) thoroughly substantiated the proposition that Soviet Russia's withdrawal from the war and a peaceful respite were an essential condition for the country's economic restoration, the strengthening of its defence capacity and the creation of an army capable of defending the country against imperialist invaders.

The materials published in this volume reflect the consistent and implacable struggle conducted by Lenin against Trotsky and the group of "Left Communists" (Bukharin, Bubnov, Lomov, Osinsky and others), who opposed the conclusion of peace and thereby endangered the existence of the socialist Republic.

The Seventh Party Congress, which was held in Petrograd on March 6-8, 1918, confirmed the correctness of Lenin's line on the question of peace and acknowledged the necessity for ratifying the peace treaty with Germany signed by the Soviet Government.

This volume contains works in which Lenin elaborates the basic principles of the scientific plan for building socialism in Russia, outlines practical steps in socialist construction—organisation of nation-wide accounting and control, raising of labour productivity, development of socialist emulation, education of the people in a new, proletarian discipline—and elaborates the principles of Soviet economic management. Among these works are the famous book *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Govern-*



ment, the articles "The Chief Task of Our Day", "How to Organise Competition?", "Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work", the book "*Left-Wing* Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", "Speech at the First All-Russia Congress of Economic Councils", and "Comments on the Draft 'Regulations for the Management of the Nationalised Enterprises'".

The "Left Communists" waged a struggle against Lenin's plan for building socialism. The position they adopted amounted in practice to defence of petty-bourgeois spontaneity and anarchistic lack of discipline. Lenin sharply criticised the "Left Communists" and showed that they expressed the interests of the petty bourgeoisie.

In the "Theses on the Present Political Situation", written in May 1918, and his letter to the Petrograd workers "On the Famine", Lenin set the task of organising a mass campaign of advanced workers to go to the countryside to help the poor peasants in their struggle against the kulaks. The Party's call was answered by many thousands of workers. Poor Peasants' Committees were formed in June 1918 and they did much for the struggle against the kulaks and for the supply of bread to the urban population and the army. Their organisation was of great importance for the development of the socialist revolution and the consolidation of Soviet power in the countryside.

This volume includes the "Speech at a Joint Session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions of Moscow, July 29, 1918", "Comrade Workers, Forward to the Last, Decisive Fight!", and the resolution adopted at a joint session of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee, the Moscow Soviet, Factory Committees and Trade Unions, October 22, 1918. In these works Lenin analysed the situation which had taken shape and characterised the country's military position. By the summer of 1918 the Soviet Republic was encircled by a fiery ring of fronts. The US, British, French and Japanese imperialists had launched war against it, and, co-operating with the overthrown exploiter classes of landowners and capitalists and relying on support from the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, they were striving to restore the old system in Russia and to enslave its peoples. The USA was one of the chief organisers and most active participants in the anti-Soviet military intervention. In his "Letter to American Workers" Lenin exposed the true countenance of the US imperialists, who had made hundreds of thousands of millions by exploiting the sufferings and calamities of the people. He stressed that Anglo-American imperialism had exposed itself before the working masses in all countries by strangling the peoples and suppressing the revolutionary move-

ment. But he expressed profound confidence in the victory of the Soviet Republic and pointed to the sources of its strength and invincibility.

Inspired by the great ideas of Lenin, the Soviet people led by the Communist Party has built socialism and is now successfully achieving the grand historical task of building up communism in the Soviet Union.

Lenin's ideas illuminate the triumphant path of struggle for the construction of socialism and communism by the working people in the socialist countries led by the Communist and Workers' Parties. They are a majestic beacon for the peoples of the world in their fight for peace, democracy, national liberation, socialism and communism.

*Institute of Marxism-Leninism,  
Central Committee, C.P.S.U.*

*Publishing House of Political  
Literature (Politizdat)*

---

# LETTERS FROM AFAR<sup>1</sup>

## FIRST LETTER

### THE FIRST STAGE OF THE FIRST REVOLUTION

The first revolution engendered by the imperialist world war has broken out. The first revolution but certainly not the last.

Judging by the scanty information available in Switzerland, the first stage of this first revolution, namely, of the *Russian* revolution of March 1, 1917, has ended. This first stage of our revolution will certainly not be the last.

How could such a "miracle" have happened, that in only eight days—the period indicated by Mr. Milyukov in his boastful telegram to all Russia's representatives abroad—a monarchy collapsed that had maintained itself for centuries, and that in spite of everything had managed to maintain itself throughout the three years of the tremendous, nation-wide class battles of 1905-07?

There are no miracles in nature or history, but every abrupt turn in history, and this applies to every revolution, presents such a wealth of content, unfolds such unexpected and specific combinations of forms of struggle and alignment of forces of the contestants, that to the lay mind there is much that must appear miraculous.

The combination of a number of factors of world-historic importance was required for the tsarist monarchy to have collapsed in a few days. We shall mention the chief of them.

Without the tremendous class battles and the revolutionary energy displayed by the Russian proletariat during the three years 1905-07, the second revolution could not possibly have been so rapid in the sense that its *initial stage* was completed in a few days. The first revolution (1905) deeply ploughed the soil, uprooted age-old prejudices, awakened millions of workers and tens of millions of peasants to political life and political struggle and revealed to each other—and to the world—all classes (and all the principal parties) of Russian society in their true character

and, in the true alignment of their interests, their forces, their modes of action, and their immediate and ultimate aims. This first revolution, and the succeeding period of counter-revolution (1907-14), laid bare the very essence of the tsarist monarchy, brought it to the "utmost limit", exposed all the rottenness and infamy, the cynicism and corruption of the tsar's clique, dominated by that monster, Rasputin. It exposed all the bestiality of the Romanov family—those pogrom-mongers who drenched Russia in the blood of Jews, workers and revolutionaries, those *landlords*, "first among peers", *who own millions* of dessiatines of land and are prepared to stoop to any brutality, to any crime, to ruin and strangle any number of citizens in order to preserve the "sacred right of property" for themselves *and their class*.

Without the Revolution of 1905-07 and the counter-revolution of 1907-14, there could not have been that clear "self-determination" of all classes of the Russian people and of the nations inhabiting Russia, that determination of the relation of these classes to each other and to the tsarist monarchy, which manifested itself during the eight days of the February-March Revolution of 1917. This eight-day revolution was "performed", if we may use a metaphorical expression, as though after a dozen major and minor rehearsals; the "actors" knew each other, their parts, their places and their setting in every detail, through and through, down to every more or less important shade of political trend and mode of action.

For the first great Revolution of 1905, which the Guchkovs and Milyukovs and their hangers-on denounced as a "great rebellion", led, after the lapse of twelve years, to the "brilliant", the "glorious" Revolution of 1917—the Guchkovs and Milyukovs have proclaimed it "glorious" because it has put them in power (*for the time being*). But this required a great, mighty and all-powerful "stage manager", capable, on the one hand, of vastly accelerating the course of world history, and, on the other, of engendering world-wide crises of unparalleled intensity—economic, political, national and international. Apart from an extraordinary acceleration of world history, it was also necessary that history make particularly abrupt turns, in order that at one such turn the filthy and blood-stained cart of the Romanov monarchy should be overturned at *one stroke*.

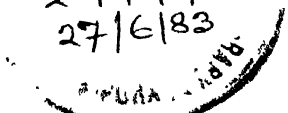
This all-powerful "stage manager", this mighty accelerator was the imperialist world war.

That it is a world war is now indisputable, for the United States and China are already half-involved today, and will be fully involved tomorrow.

That it is an imperialist war on *both* sides is now likewise indisputable. Only the capitalists and their hangers-on, the social-

24444

27/6/83



patriots and social-chauvinists, or—if instead of general critical definitions we use political names familiar in Russia—only the Guchkovs and Lvovs, Milyukovs and Shingaryovs on the one hand, and only the Gvozdyovs, Potresovs, Chkhenkelis, Kerenskys and Chkheidzes on the other, can deny or gloss over this fact. *Both* the German and the Anglo-French bourgeoisie are waging the war for the plunder of foreign countries and the strangling of small nations, for financial world supremacy and the division and redivision of colonies, and in order to save the tottering capitalist regime by misleading and dividing the workers of the various countries.

The imperialist war was bound, with objective inevitability, immensely to accelerate and intensify to an unprecedented degree the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie; it was bound to turn into a civil war between the hostile classes.

This *transformation has been started* by the February-March Revolution of 1917, the first stage of which has been marked, firstly, by a joint blow at tsarism struck by two forces: one, the whole of bourgeois and landlord Russia, with all her unconscious hangers-on and all her conscious leaders, the British and French ambassadors and capitalists, and the other, *the Soviet of Workers' Deputies*, which has begun to win over the soldiers' and peasants' deputies.<sup>2</sup>

These three political camps, these three fundamental political forces—(1) the tsarist monarchy, the head of the feudal landlords, of the old bureaucracy and the military caste; (2) bourgeois and landlord-Octoberist-Cadet<sup>3</sup> Russia, behind which trailed the petty bourgeoisie (of which Kerensky and Chkheidze are the principal representatives); (3) the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, which is seeking to make the entire proletariat and the entire mass of the poorest part of the population its allies—these three *fundamental* political forces fully and clearly revealed themselves even in the eight days of the “first stage” and even to an observer so remote from the scene of events as the present writer, who is obliged to content himself with the meagre foreign press dispatches.

But before dealing with this in greater detail, I must return to the part of my letter devoted to a factor of prime importance, namely, the imperialist world war.

The war shackled the belligerent powers, the belligerent groups of capitalists, the “bosses” of the capitalist system, the slave-owners of the capitalist slave system, to each other with *chains of iron*. *One bloody clot*—such is the social and political life of the present moment in history.

The socialists who deserted to the bourgeoisie on the outbreak of the war—all these Davids and Scheidemanns in Germany and the Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Gvozdyovs and Co. in Russia—

clamoured loud and long against the "illusions" of the revolutionaries, against the "illusions" of the Basle Manifesto,<sup>4</sup> against the "farcical dream" of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. They sang praises in every key to the strength, tenacity and adaptability allegedly revealed by capitalism—they, who had aided the capitalists to "adapt", tame, mislead and divide the working classes of the various countries!

But "he who laughs last laughs best". The bourgeoisie has been unable to delay for long the revolutionary crisis engendered by the war. That crisis is growing with irresistible force in all countries, beginning with Germany, which, according to an observer who recently visited that country, is suffering "brilliantly organised famine", and ending with England and France, where *famine is also* looming, but where organisation is far less "brilliant".

It was natural that the revolutionary crisis should have broken out *first of all* in tsarist Russia, where the disorganisation was most appalling and the proletariat most revolutionary (not by virtue of any special qualities, but because of the living traditions of 1905). This crisis was precipitated by the series of extremely severe defeats sustained by Russia and her allies. They shook up the old machinery of government and the old order and roused the anger of *all* classes of the population against them; they embittered the army, wiped out a very large part of the old commanding personnel, composed of die-hard aristocrats and exceptionally corrupt bureaucratic elements, and replaced it by a young, fresh, mainly bourgeois, commoner,<sup>5</sup> petty-bourgeois personnel. Those who, grovelling to the bourgeoisie or simply lacking backbone, howled and wailed about "defeatism", are now faced by the fact of the historical connection between the defeat of the most backward and barbarous tsarist monarchy and the *beginning* of the revolutionary conflagration.

But while the defeats early in the war were a negative factor that precipitated the upheaval, the *connection* between Anglo-French finance capital, Anglo-French imperialism, and Russian Octobrist-Cadet capital was a factor that hastened this crisis by the direct *organisation of a plot* against Nicholas Romanov.

This highly important aspect of the situation is, for obvious reasons, hushed up by the Anglo-French press and maliciously emphasised by the German. We Marxists must soberly face the truth and not allow ourselves to be confused either by the lies, the official sugary diplomatic and ministerial lies, of the first group of imperialist belligerents, or by the sniggering and smirking of their financial and military rivals of the other belligerent group. The whole course of events in the February-March Revolution clearly shows that the British and French embassies, with their

agents and "connections", who had long been making the most desperate efforts to prevent "separate" agreements and a separate peace between Nicholas II (and last, we hope, and we will endeavour to make him that) and Wilhelm II, directly organised a plot in conjunction with the Octobrists and Cadets, in conjunction with a section of the generals and army and St. Petersburg garrison officers, with the express object of *deposing* Nicholas Romanov.

Let us not harbour any illusions. Let us not make the mistake of those who—like certain O.C. supporters or Mensheviks<sup>6</sup> who are oscillating between Gvozdyov-Potresov policy<sup>7</sup> and internationalism and only too often slip into petty-bourgeois pacifism—are now ready to extol "agreement" between the workers' party and the Cadets, "support" of the latter by the former, etc. In conformity with the old (and by no means Marxist) doctrine that they have learned by rote, they are trying to veil the plot of the Anglo-French imperialists and the Guchkovs and Milyukovs aimed at deposing the "chief warrior", Nicholas Romanov, and putting more energetic, fresh and more capable *warriors* in his place.

That the revolution succeeded so quickly and—seemingly, at the first superficial glance—so radically, is only due to the fact that, as a result of an extremely unique historical situation, *absolutely dissimilar currents, absolutely heterogeneous* class interests, *absolutely contrary* political and social strivings have *merged*, and in a strikingly "harmonious" manner. Namely, the conspiracy of the Anglo-French imperialists, who impelled Milyukov, Guchkov and Co. to seize power *for the purpose of continuing the imperialist war*, for the purpose of conducting the war still more ferociously and obstinately, for the purpose of *slaughtering fresh millions* of Russian workers and peasants in order that the Guchkovs might obtain Constantinople, the French capitalists Syria, the British capitalists Mesopotamia, and so on. This on the one hand. On the other, there was a profound proletarian and mass popular movement of a revolutionary character (a movement of the entire poorest section of the population of town and country) for *bread*, for *peace*, for *real freedom*.

It would simply be foolish to speak of the revolutionary proletariat of Russia "supporting" the Cadet-Octobrist imperialism, which has been "patched up" with English money and is as abominable as tsarist imperialism. The revolutionary workers were destroying, have already destroyed to a considerable degree and will destroy to its foundations the infamous tsarist *monarchy*. They are neither elated nor dismayed by the fact that at certain brief and exceptional historical conjunctures *they were aided* by the struggle of Buchanan, Guchkov, Milyukov and Co. to *replace* one monarch by *another monarch*, also preferably a Romanov!

Such, and only such, is the way the situation developed. Such, and only such, is the view that can be taken by a politician who does not fear the truth, who soberly weighs the balance of social forces in the revolution, who appraises every "current situation" not only from the standpoint of all its present, current peculiarities, but also from the standpoint of the more fundamental motivations, the deeper interest-relationship of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, both in Russia and throughout the world.

The workers of Petrograd, like the workers of the whole of Russia, self-sacrificingly fought the tsarist monarchy—fought for freedom, land for the peasants, and *for peace*, against the imperialist slaughter. To continue and intensify that slaughter, Anglo-French imperialist capital hatched Court intrigues, conspired with the officers of the Guards, incited and encouraged the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, and fixed up a *complete new government*, which in fact *did seize power* immediately the proletarian struggle had struck the first blows at tsarism.

This new government, in which Lvov and Guchkov of the Octobrists and Peaceful Renovation Party,<sup>8</sup> yesterday's abettors of Stolypin the Hangman, control *really important* posts, vital posts, decisive posts, the army and the bureaucracy—this government, in which Milyukov and the other Cadets are more than anything decorations, a signboard—they are there to deliver sentimental professorial speeches—and in which the Trudovik<sup>9</sup> Kerensky is a balalaika on which they play to deceive the workers and peasants—this government is not a fortuitous assemblage of persons.<sup>10</sup>

They are representatives of the new class that has risen to political power in Russia, the class of capitalist landlords and bourgeoisie which has long been *ruling* our country economically, and which during the Revolution of 1905-07, the counter-revolutionary period of 1907-14, and finally—and with especial rapidity—the war period of 1914-17, was quick to organise itself politically, taking over control of the local government bodies, public education, congresses of various types, the Duma,<sup>11</sup> the war industries committees,<sup>12</sup> etc. This new class was already "almost completely" *in power* by 1917, and therefore it needed only the first blows to bring tsarism to the ground and clear the way for the bourgeoisie. The imperialist war, which required an incredible exertion of effort, so accelerated the course of backward Russia's development that we have "at one blow" (*seemingly* at one blow) *caught up* with Italy, England, and almost with France. We have obtained a "coalition", a "national" (i.e., adapted for carrying on the imperialist slaughter and for fooling the people) "parliamentary" government.



Side by side with this government—which as regards the *present* war is but the agent of the billion-dollar “firm” “England and France”—there has arisen the chief, unofficial, as yet undeveloped and comparatively weak *workers’ government*, which expresses the interests of the proletariat and of the entire poor section of the urban and rural population. This is the *Soviet of Workers’ Deputies* in Petrograd, which is seeking connections with the soldiers and peasants, and also with the agricultural workers, with the latter particularly and primarily, of course, more than with the peasants.

Such is the *actual* political situation, which we must first endeavour to define with the greatest possible objective precision, in order that Marxist tactics may be based upon the only possible solid foundation—the foundation of *facts*.

The tsarist monarchy has been smashed, but not finally destroyed.

The Octobrist-Cadet bourgeois government, which wants to fight the imperialist war “to a finish”, and which in reality is the agent of the financial firm “England and France”, is *obliged to promise* the people the maximum of liberties and sops compatible with the maintenance of its power over the people and the possibility of continuing the imperialist slaughter.

The Soviet of Workers’ Deputies is an organisation of the workers, the embryo of a workers’ government, the representative of the interests of the entire mass of the *poor* section of the population, i.e., of nine-tenths of the population, which is striving for *peace, bread and freedom*.

The conflict of these three forces determines the situation that has now arisen, a situation that is *transitional* from the first stage of the revolution to the second.

The antagonism between the first and second force is *not* profound, it is temporary, the result *solely* of the present conjuncture of circumstances, of the abrupt turn of events in the imperialist war. The *whole* of the new government is monarchist, for Kerensky’s *verbal* republicanism simply cannot be taken seriously, is not worthy of a statesman and, *objectively*, is political chicanery. The new government, which has not dealt the tsarist monarchy the final blow, has already *begun to strike a bargain* with the landlord Romanov dynasty. The bourgeoisie of the Octobrist-Cadet type *needs* a monarchy to serve as the head of the bureaucracy and the army in order to protect the privileges of capital against the working people.

He who says that the workers must *support* the new government in the interests of the struggle against tsarist reaction (and apparently this is being said by the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs, Chkhenskis and also, all *evasiveness* notwithstanding, by Chkheidze) is

a traitor to the workers, a traitor to the cause of the proletariat, to the cause of peace and freedom. For actually, *precisely* this new government is *already* bound hand and foot by imperialist capital, by the imperialist policy of *war* and plunder, has *already* begun to strike a bargain (without consulting the people!) with the dynasty, *is already working to restore the tsarist monarchy*, is already soliciting the candidature of Mikhail Romanov as the new kinglet, is already taking measures to prop up the throne, to substitute for the legitimate (lawful, ruling by virtue of the old law) monarchy a Bonapartist, plebiscite monarchy (ruling by virtue of a fraudulent plebiscite).

No, if there is to be a real struggle against the tsarist monarchy, if freedom is to be guaranteed in fact and not merely in words, in the glib promises of Milyukov and Kerensky, the workers must *not* support the new government; the government must "support" the workers! For the only *guarantee* of freedom and of the complete destruction of tsarism lies in *arming the proletariat*, in strengthening, extending and developing the role, significance and power of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

All the rest is mere phrase-mongering and lies, self-deception on the part of the politicians of the liberal and radical camp, fraudulent trickery.

Help, or at least do not hinder, the arming of the workers, and freedom in Russia will be invincible, the monarchy irrestorable, the republic secure.

Otherwise the Guchkovs and Milyukovs will restore the monarchy and grant *none*, absolutely none of the "liberties" they promised. All bourgeois politicians in *all* bourgeois revolutions "fed" the people and fooled the workers with promises.

Ours is a bourgeois revolution, *therefore*, the workers must support the bourgeoisie, say the Potresovs, Gvozdyovs and Chkheidzes, as Plekhanov said yesterday.

Ours is a bourgeois revolution, we Marxists say, *therefore* the workers must open the eyes of the people to the deception practised by the bourgeois politicians, teach them to put no faith in words, to depend entirely on their *own* strength, their *own* organisation, their *own* unity, and their *own* weapons.

The government of the Octobrists and Cadets, of the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, *cannot*, even if it sincerely wanted to (only infants can think that Guchkov and Lvov are sincere), *cannot* give the people *either peace, bread, or freedom*.

It cannot give peace because it is a war government, a government for the continuation of the imperialist slaughter, a government of *plunder*, out to plunder Armenia, Galicia and Turkey, annex Constantinople, reconquer Poland, Courland, Lithuania, etc. It is a government bound hand and foot by Anglo-French im-

perialist capital. Russian capital is merely a branch of the world-wide "firm" which manipulates *hundreds of billions* of rubles and is called "England and France".

It cannot give bread because it is a bourgeois government. *At best*, it can give the people "brilliantly organised famine", as Germany has done. But the people will not accept famine. They will learn, and probably very soon, that there is bread and that it can be obtained, but only by methods that *do not respect the sanctity of capital and landownership*.

It cannot give freedom because it is a landlord and capitalist government which *fears* the people and has already begun to strike a bargain with the Romanov dynasty.

The tactical problems of our immediate attitude towards this government will be dealt with in another article. In it, we shall explain the peculiarity of the present situation, which is a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution to the second, and why the slogan, the "task of the day", at *this* moment must be: *Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism. You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution.*

Confining ourselves for the *present* to an analysis of the class struggle and the alignment of class forces at this stage of the revolution, we have still to put the question: who are the proletariat's *allies* in *this* revolution?

It has *two* allies: first, the broad mass of the semi-proletarian and partly also of the small-peasant population, who number scores of millions and constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia. For this mass peace, bread, freedom and land are *essential*. It is inevitable that to a certain extent this mass will be under the influence of the bourgeoisie, particularly of the petty bourgeoisie, to which it is most akin in its conditions of life, vacillating between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The cruel lessons of war, and they will be *the more* cruel the more vigorously the war is prosecuted by Guchkov, Lvov, Milvukov and Co., will *inevitably* push this mass towards the proletariat, compel it to follow the proletariat. We must now take advantage of the relative freedom of the new order and of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies to *enlighten* and *organise* this mass first of all and above all. Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Soviets of Agricultural Workers—that is one of our most urgent tasks. In this connection we shall strive not only for the agricultural workers to establish their own separate Soviets, but also for the propertyless and poorest peasants to organise *separately* from the well-to-do peasants. The special tasks and special forms of orga-

nisation urgently needed at the present time will be dealt with in the next letter.

Second, the ally of the Russian proletariat is the proletariat of all the belligerent countries and of all countries in general. At present this ally is to a large degree repressed by the war, and all too often the European social-chauvinists speak in its name—men who, like Plekhanov, Gvozdyov and Potresov in Russia, have deserted to the bourgeoisie. But the liberation of the proletariat from their influence has progressed with every month of the imperialist war, and the Russian revolution will *inevitably* immensely hasten this process.

With these two allies, the proletariat, *utilising the peculiarities* of the present transition situation, can and will proceed, first, to the achievement of a democratic republic and complete victory of the peasantry over the landlords, instead of the Guchkov-Milyukov semi-monarchy, and then to *socialism*, which alone can give the war-weary people *peace, bread and freedom*.

*N. Lenin*

Written on March 7 (20), 1917

Published in an abridged form  
in *Pravda* Nos. 14 and 15,  
March 21 and 22, 1917

First published in full in 1949  
in Lenin's *Collected Works*,  
fourth Russian edition, Vol. 23

*Collected Works*, Vol. 23,  
pp 297-308

---

## THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION<sup>13</sup>

I did not arrive in Petrograd until the night of April 3, and therefore at the meeting on April 4 I could, of course, deliver the report on the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat only on my own behalf, and with reservations as to insufficient preparation.

The only thing I could do to make things easier for myself—and for *honest* opponents—was to prepare the theses *in writing*. I read them out, and gave the text to Comrade Tsereteli. I read them *twice* very slowly: first at a meeting of Bolsheviks and then at a meeting of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

I publish these personal theses of mine with only the briefest explanatory notes, which were developed in far greater detail in the report.

### THESES

1) In our attitude towards the war, which under the new government of Lvov and Co. unquestionably remains on Russia's part a predatory imperialist war owing to the capitalist nature of that government, not the slightest concession to "revolutionary defencism" is permissible.

The class-conscious proletariat can give its consent to a revolutionary war, which would really justify revolutionary defencism, only on condition: (a) that the power pass to the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants aligned with the proletariat; (b) that all annexations be renounced in deed and not in word; (c) that a complete break be effected in actual fact with all capitalist interests.

In view of the undoubted honesty of those broad sections of the mass believers in revolutionary defencism who accept the war only as a necessity, and not as a means of conquest, in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is

necessary with particular thoroughness, persistence and patience to explain their error to them, to explain the inseparable connection existing between capital and the imperialist war, and to prove that without overthrowing capital *it is impossible* to end the war by a truly democratic peace, a peace not imposed by violence.

The most widespread campaign for this view must be organised in the army at the front.

Fraternisation.

2) The specific feature of the present situation in Russia is that the country is *passing* from the first stage of the revolution—which, owing to the insufficient class-consciousness and organisation of the proletariat, placed power in the hands of the bourgeoisie—to its *second* stage, which must place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasants.

This transition is characterised, on the one hand, by a maximum of legally recognised rights (Russia is *now* the freest of all the belligerent countries in the world); on the other, by the absence of violence towards the masses, and, finally, by their unreasoning trust in the government of capitalists, those worst enemies of peace and socialism.

This peculiar situation demands of us an ability to adapt ourselves to the *special* conditions of Party work among unprecedentedly large masses of proletarians who have just awakened to political life.

3) No support for the Provisional Government; the utter falsity of all its promises should be made clear, particularly of those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Exposure in place of the impermissible, illusion-breeding “demand” that *this* government, a government of capitalists, should *cease* to be an imperialist government.

4) Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies our Party is in a minority, so far a small minority, as against *a bloc of all* the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements, from the Popular Socialists<sup>14</sup> and the Socialist-Revolutionaries<sup>15</sup> down to the Organising Committee (Chkhaidze, Tsereteli, etc.), Steklov, etc., etc., who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and spread that influence among the proletariat.

The masses must be made to see that the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies are the *only possible* form of revolutionary government, and that therefore our task is, as long as *this* government yields to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

As long as we are in the minority we carry on the work of

criticising and exposing errors and at the same time we preach the necessity of transferring the entire state power to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, so that the people may overcome their mistakes by experience.

5) Not a parliamentary republic—to return to a parliamentary republic from the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would be a retrograde step—but a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies throughout the country, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army and the bureaucracy.\*

The salaries of all officials, all of whom are elective and displaceable at any time, not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6) The weight of emphasis in the agrarian programme to be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all landed estates.

Nationalisation of *all* lands in the country, the land to be disposed of by the local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. The organisation of separate Soviets of Deputies of Poor Peasants. The setting up of a model farm on each of the large estates (ranging in size from 100 to 300 dessiatines, according to local and other conditions, and to the decisions of the local bodies) under the control of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and for the public account.

7) The immediate amalgamation of all banks in the country into a single national bank, and the institution of control over it by the Soviet of Workers' Deputies.

8) It is not our *immediate* task to "introduce" socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

9) Party tasks:

(a) Immediate convocation of a Party congress;

(b) Alteration of the Party Programme, mainly:

(1) On the question of imperialism and the imperialist war;

(2) On our attitude towards the state and *our* demand for a "commune state"\*\*\*;

(3) Amendment of our out-of-date minimum programme.

(c) Change of the Party's name.'\*\*

10) A new International.

\* i.e., the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the whole people.

\*\* i.e., a state of which the Paris Commune was the prototype.

\*\*\* Instead of "Social-Democracy", whose official leaders *throughout* the world have betrayed socialism and deserted to the bourgeoisie (the "defencists" and the vacillating "Kautskyites"), we must call ourselves the *Communist Party*.

We must take the initiative in creating a revolutionary International, an International against the *social-chauvinists* and against the "Centre".\*

In order that the reader may understand why I had especially to emphasise as a rare exception the "case" of honest opponents, I invite him to compare the above theses with the following objection by Mr. Goldenberg: Lenin, he said, "has planted the banner of civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy" (quoted in No. 5 of Mr. Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo*<sup>16</sup>).

Isn't it a gem?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: "In view of the undoubted honesty of those *broad* sections of the *mass* believers in revolutionary defencism . . . in view of the fact that they are being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary with *particular* thoroughness, persistence and *patience* to explain their error to them. . . ."

Yet the bourgeois gentlemen who call themselves Social-Democrats, who *do not* belong either to the *broad* sections or to the *mass* believers in defencism, with serene brow present my views thus: "The banner (!)\*\* of civil war" (of which there is not a word in the theses and not a word in my speech!) has been planted (!) "in the midst (!) of revolutionary democracy. . . ."

What does this mean? In what way does this differ from riot-inciting agitation, from *Russkaya Volya*<sup>17</sup>?

I write, announce and elaborately explain: "The Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the *only possible* form of revolutionary government, and therefore our task is to present a patient, systematic, and persistent *explanation* of the errors of their tactics, an explanation especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses."

Yet opponents of a certain brand present my views as a call to "civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy"!

I attacked the Provisional Government for *not* having appointed an early date, or any date at all, for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and for confining itself to promises. I argued that *without* the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success is impossible.

\* The "Centre" in the international Social-Democratic movement is the trend which vacillates between the chauvinists (= "defencists") and internationalists, i.e., Kautsky and Co. in Germany, Longuet and Co. in France, Chkheidze and Co. in Russia, Turati and Co. in Italy, MacDonald and Co. in Britain, etc.

\*\* Interpolations in square brackets (within passages quoted by Lenin) have been introduced by Lenin, unless otherwise indicated.—Ed.



And the view is attributed to me that I am opposed to the speedy convocation of the Constituent Assembly!

I would call this "raving", had not decades of political struggle taught me to regard honesty in opponents as a rare exception.

Mr. Plekhanov in his paper called my speech "raving". Very good, Mr. Plekhanov! But look how awkward, uncouth, and slow-witted you are in your polemics. If I delivered a raving speech for two hours, how is it that an audience of hundreds tolerated this "raving"? Further, why does your paper devote a whole column to an account of the "raving"? Inconsistent, highly inconsistent!

It is, of course, much easier to shout, abuse, and howl than to attempt to relate, to explain, to recall *what* Marx and Engels said in 1871, 1872 and 1875 about the experience of the Paris Commune<sup>18</sup> and about the *kind* of state the proletariat needs.

Ex-Marxist Mr. Plekhanov evidently does not care to recall Marxism.

I quoted the words of Rosa Luxemburg, who on August 4, 1914, called *German* Social-Democracy a "stinking corpse". And the Plekhanovs, Goldenbergs and Co. feel "offended". On whose behalf? On behalf of the *German* chauvinists, because they were called chauvinists!

They have got themselves in a mess, these poor Russian social-chauvinists—socialists in word and chauvinists in deed.

Written on April 4 and 5 (17 and 18), 1917

Published April 7, 1917  
in *Pravda* No 26  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 21 26

---

## THE DUAL POWER

The basic question of every revolution is that of state power. Unless this question is understood, there can be no intelligent participation in the revolution, not to speak of guidance of the revolution.

The highly remarkable feature of our revolution is that it has brought about a *dual power*. This fact must be grasped first and foremost: unless it is understood, we cannot advance. We must know how to supplement and amend old "formulas", for example, those of Bolshevism, for while they have been found to be correct on the whole, their concrete realisation *has turned out to be* different. *Nobody* previously thought, or could have thought, of a dual power.

What is this dual power? Alongside the Provisional Government, the government of the *bourgeoisie*, *another government* has arisen, so far weak and incipient, but undoubtedly a government that actually exists and is growing—the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

What is the class composition of this other government? It consists of the proletariat and the peasants (in soldiers' uniforms). What is the political nature of this government? It is a revolutionary dictatorship, i.e., a power directly based on revolutionary seizure, on the direct initiative of the people from below, and *not on a law* enacted by a centralised state power. It is an entirely different kind of power from the one that generally exists in the parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republics of the usual type still prevailing in the advanced countries of Europe and America. This circumstance is often overlooked, often not given enough thought, yet it is the crux of the matter. *This* power is of *the same type* as the Paris Commune of 1871. The fundamental characteristics of this type are: (1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct

initiative of the people from below, in their local areas—direct “seizure”, to use a current expression; (2) the replacement of the police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the whole people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants *themselves*, by the armed people *themselves*; (3) officialdom, the bureaucracy, is either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also *subject to recall* at the people’s first demand; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged group holding “jobs” remunerated on a high, bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special “arm of the service”, whose remuneration *does not exceed* the ordinary pay of a competent worker.

This, and this *alone*, constitutes the *essence* of the Paris Commune as a special type of state. This essence has been forgotten or perverted by the Plekhanovs (downright chauvinists who have betrayed Marxism), the Kautskys (the men of the “Centre”, i.e., those who vacillate between chauvinism and Marxism), and generally by all those Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc., who now rule the roost.

They are trying to get away with empty phrases, evasions, subterfuges; they congratulate each other a thousand times upon the revolution, but refuse to *consider what* the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies *are*. They refuse to recognise the obvious truth that inasmuch as these Soviets exist, *inasmuch as* they are a power, we have in Russia a state of the *type* of the Paris Commune.

I have emphasised the words “inasmuch as”, for it is only an incipient power. By direct agreement with the bourgeois Provisional Government and by a series of actual concessions, it has itself *surrendered and is surrendering* its positions to the bourgeoisie.

Why? Is it because Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov and Co. are making a “mistake”? Nonsense. Only a philistine can think so—not a Marxist. The reason is *insufficient class-consciousness* and organisation of the proletarians and peasants. The “mistake” of the leaders I have named lies in their petty-bourgeois position, in the fact that instead of clarifying the minds of the workers, they are *befogging* them; instead of dispelling petty-bourgeois illusions, they are *instilling* them; instead of freeing the people from bourgeois influence, they are *strengthening* that influence.

It should be clear from this why our comrades, too, make so many mistakes when putting the question “simply”: Should the Provisional Government be overthrown immediately?

My answer is: (1) it should be overthrown, for it is an oligarchic, bourgeois, and not a people's government, and is *unable* to provide peace, bread, or full freedom; (2) it cannot be overthrown just now, for it is being kept in power by a direct and indirect, a formal and actual *agreement* with the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, and primarily with the chief Soviet, the Petrograd Soviet; (3) generally, it cannot be "overthrown" in the ordinary way, for it rests on the "*support*" given to the bourgeoisie by the *second* government—the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and that government is the only possible revolutionary government, which directly expresses the mind and will of the majority of the workers and peasants. Humanity has not yet evolved and we do not as yet know a type of government superior to and better than the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies.

To become a power the class-conscious workers must win the majority to their side. *As long as* no violence is used against the people there is no other road to power. We are not Blanquists,<sup>19</sup> we do not stand for the seizure of power by a minority. We are Marxists, we stand for proletarian class struggle against petty-bourgeois intoxication, against chauvinism-defencism, phrasemongering and dependence on the bourgeoisie.

Let us create a proletarian Communist Party; its elements have already been created by the best adherents of Bolshevism; let us rally our ranks for proletarian class work; and larger and larger numbers from among the proletarians, from among the *poorest* peasants will range themselves on our side. For *actual experience* will from day to day shatter the petty-bourgeois illusions of those "Social-Democrats", the Chkheidzes, Tseretelis, Steklovs and others, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries", the petty bourgeois of an even purer water, and so on and so forth.

The bourgeoisie stands for the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The class-conscious workers stand for the undivided power of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants', and Soldiers' Deputies—for undivided power made possible not by adventurist acts, but by *clarifying* proletarian minds, by *emancipating* them from the influence of the bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeoisie—"Social-Democrats", Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., etc.—vacillate and, thereby, *hinder* this clarification and emancipation.

This is the actual, the *class* alignment of forces that determines our tasks.

---

# THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

DRAFT PLATFORM FOR THE PROLETARIAN PARTY

The moment of history through which Russia is now passing is marked by the following main characteristics:

## THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE

1. The old tsarist power, which represented only a handful of feudalist landowners who commanded the entire state machinery (the army, the police, and the bureaucracy), has been overthrown and removed, but not completely destroyed. The monarchy has not been formally abolished; the Romanov gang continues to hatch monarchist intrigues. The vast landed possessions of the feudalist squirearchy have not been abolished.

2. State power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new *class*, namely, the bourgeoisie and landowners who had become bourgeois. *To this extent* the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia is completed.

Having come to power, the bourgeoisie has formed a bloc (an alliance) with the overt monarchists, who are notorious for their exceptionally ardent support of Nicholas the Bloody and Stolypin the Hangman in 1906-14 (Guchkov and other politicians to the right of the Cadets). The new bourgeois government of Lvov and Co. has attempted and has begun to negotiate with the Romanovs for the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. Behind a screen of revolutionary phrases, this government is appointing partisans of the old regime to key positions. It is striving to reform the whole machinery of state (the army, the police, and the bureaucracy) as little as possible, and has turned it over to the bourgeoisie. The new government has already begun to hinder in every way the revolutionary initiative of mass action and the seizure of power by

the people *from below*, which is the *sole* guarantee of the real success of the revolution.

Up to now this government has not even fixed a date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. It is not laying a finger on the landed estates, which form the material foundation of feudal tsarism. This government does not even contemplate starting an investigation into, and making public, the activities of the monopolist financial organisations, the big banks, the syndicates and cartels of the capitalists, etc., or instituting control over them.

The key positions, the decisive ministerial posts in the new government (the Ministry of the Interior and the War Ministry, i.e., the command over the army, the police, the bureaucracy—the entire apparatus for oppressing the people) are held by outright monarchists and supporters of the system of big landed estates. The Cadets, those day-old republicans, republicans against their own will, have been assigned minor posts, having no direct relation to the *command* over the people or to the apparatus of state power. A. Kerensky, a Trudovik and “would-be socialist”, has no function whatsoever, except to lull the vigilance and attention of the people with sonorous phrases.

For all these reasons, the new bourgeois government does not deserve the confidence of the proletariat even in the sphere of internal policy, and no support of this government by the proletariat is admissible.

## THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

3. In the field of foreign policy, which has now been brought to the forefront by objective circumstances, the new government is a government for the continuation of the imperialist war, a war that is being waged in alliance with the imperialist powers—Britain, France, and others—for division of the capitalist spoils and for subjugating small and weak nations.

Subordinated to the interests of Russian capitalism and its powerful protector and master—Anglo-French imperialist capitalism, the wealthiest in the world, the new government, notwithstanding the wishes expressed in no uncertain fashion on behalf of the obvious majority of the peoples of Russia through the Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, has taken no real steps to put an end to the slaughter of peoples for the interests of the capitalists. It has not even published the secret treaties of an obviously predatory character (for the partition of Persia, the plunder of China, the plunder of Turkey, the partition of Austria,

the annexation of Eastern Prussia, the annexation of the German colonies, etc.), which, as everybody knows, bind Russia to Anglo-French predatory imperialist capital. It has *confirmed* these treaties concluded by tsarism, which for centuries robbed and oppressed more nations than other tyrants and despots, and which not only oppressed, but also disgraced and demoralised the Great-Russian nation by making it an executioner of other nations.

The new government has confirmed these shameful depredatory treaties and has not proposed an immediate armistice to all the belligerent nations, in spite of the clearly expressed demand of the majority of the peoples of Russia, voiced through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It has evaded the issue with the help of solemn, sonorous, bombastic, but absolutely empty declarations and phrases, which, in the mouths of bourgeois diplomats, have always served, and still serve, to deceive the trustful and naïve masses of the oppressed people.

4. Not only, therefore, is the new government unworthy of the slightest confidence in the field of foreign policy, but to go on demanding that it should proclaim the will of the peoples of Russia for peace, that it should renounce annexations, and so on and so forth, is in practice merely to deceive the people, to inspire them with false hopes and to retard the clarification of their minds. It is indirectly to reconcile them to the continuation of a war the true social character of which is determined not by pious wishes, but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the connection between the class represented by this government and the imperialist finance capital of Russia, Britain, France, etc., by *the real and actual policy* which that class is pursuing.

## THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE DUAL POWER AND ITS CLASS SIGNIFICANCE

5. The main feature of our revolution, a feature that most imperatively demands thoughtful consideration, is the *dual power* which arose in the very first days after the triumph of the revolution.

This dual power is evident in the existence of *two* governments: one is the main, the real, the actual government of the bourgeoisie, the "Provisional Government" of Lvov and Co., which holds in its hands all the organs of power; the other is a supplementary and parallel government, a "controlling" government in the shape of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which holds no organs of state power, but directly rests on the support of

an obvious and indisputable majority of the people, on the armed workers and soldiers.

The class origin and the class significance of this dual power is the following: the Russian revolution of March 1917 not only swept away the whole tsarist monarchy, not only transferred the entire power to the bourgeoisie, but also *moved close towards* a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. The Petrograd and the other, the local, Soviets constitute precisely such a dictatorship (that is, a power resting not on the law but directly on the force of armed masses of the population), a dictatorship precisely of the above-mentioned classes.

6. The second highly important feature of the Russian revolution is the fact that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which, as everything goes to show, enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, is *voluntarily* transferring state power to the bourgeoisie and its Provisional Government, is voluntarily *ceding* supremacy to the latter, having entered into an agreement to support it, and is limiting its own role to that of an observer, a supervisor of the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date for which has not even been announced as yet by the Provisional Government).

This remarkable feature, unparalleled in history in such a form, has led to the *interlocking of two* dictatorships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, i.e., a power based not on the law, not on the previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, accomplished by a definite class, namely, the bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry (the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies).

There is not the slightest doubt that such an "interlocking" *cannot* last long. Two powers *cannot exist* in a state. One of them is bound to pass away; and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already trying its hardest everywhere and in every way to keep out and weaken the Soviets, to reduce them to nought, and to establish the undivided power of the bourgeoisie.

The dual power merely expresses a *transitional* phase in the revolution's development, when it has gone farther than the ordinary bourgeois-democratic revolution, *but has not yet reached* a "pure" dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

The class significance (and the class explanation) of this transitional and unstable situation is this: like all revolutions, our revolution required the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice on the part of the people for the struggle against tsarism; it also immediately *drew* unprecedentedly vast numbers of ordinary citizens *into the movement*.



From the point of view of science and practical politics, one of the chief symptoms of *every* real revolution is the unusually rapid, sudden, and abrupt increase in the number of "ordinary citizens" who begin to participate actively, independently and effectively in political life and in the *organisation of the state*.

Such is the case in Russia. Russia at present is seething. Millions and tens of millions of people, who had been politically dormant for ten years and politically crushed by the terrible oppression of tsarism and by inhuman toil for the landowners and capitalists, *have awakened and taken eagerly* to politics. And who are these millions and tens of millions? For the most part small proprietors, petty bourgeois, people standing midway between the capitalists and the wage-workers. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois of all European countries.

A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept over everything and overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat, not only by force of numbers but also ideologically; that is, it has infected and imbued very wide circles of workers with the petty-bourgeois political outlook.

The petty bourgeoisie are in real life dependent upon the bourgeoisie, for they live like masters and not like proletarians (from the point of view of their *place* in social *production*) and follow the bourgeoisie in their outlook.

An attitude of unreasoning trust in the capitalists—the worst foes of peace and socialism—characterises the politics of the *popular masses* in Russia at the present moment; this is the fruit that has *grown* with revolutionary rapidity on the social and economic soil of the most petty-bourgeois of all European countries. This is the *class* basis for the "*agreement*" between the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (I emphasise that I am referring not so much to the formal agreement as to *actual* support, a tacit agreement, the surrender of power inspired by unreasoning trust), an agreement which has given the Guchkovs a fat piece—real power—and the Soviet merely promises and honours (for the time being), flattery, phrases, assurances, and the bowings and scrapings of the Kerenskys.

On the other side we have the inadequate numerical strength of the proletariat in Russia and its insufficient class-consciousness and organisation.

All the Narodnik parties, including the Social-Revolutionaries, have always been petty-bourgeois. This is also true of the party of the Organising Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.). The non-party revolutionaries (Steklov and others) have similarly yielded to the tide, or have not been able to stand up to it, have not had the time to do it.

## THE PECULIAR NATURE OF THE TACTICS WHICH FOLLOW FROM THE ABOVE

7. For the Marxist, who must reckon with objective facts, with the masses and classes, and not with individuals and so on, the peculiar nature of the actual situation as described above must determine the peculiar nature of the tactics for the *present* moment.

This peculiarity of the situation calls, in the first place, for the "pouring of vinegar and bile into the sweet water of revolutionary-democratic phraseology" (as my fellow-member on the Central Committee of our Party, Teodorovich, so aptly put it at yesterday's session of the All-Russia Congress of Railwaymen in Petrograd<sup>20</sup>). Our work must be one of criticism, of *explaining* the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Social-Democratic parties, of preparing and welding the elements of a *consciously* proletarian, Communist Party, and of *curing* the proletariat of the "general" petty-bourgeois intoxication.

This *seems* to be "nothing more" than propaganda work, but in reality it is most *practical revolutionary* work; for there is no advancing a revolution that has come to a standstill, that has choked itself with phrases, and that keeps "marking time", *not because* of external obstacles, *not because of the violence* of the bourgeoisie (Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence against the soldier mass), but *because* of the unreasoning trust of the people.

Only by overcoming this unreasoning trust (and we can and should overcome it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by pointing to the *lessons of experience*) can we set ourselves free from the prevailing *orgy of revolutionary phrase-mongering* and really stimulate the consciousness both of the proletariat and of the mass in general, as well as their bold and determined initiative *in the localities*—the independent realisation, development and consolidation of liberties, democracy, and the principle of people's ownership of all the land.

8. The world-wide experience of bourgeois and landowner governments has evolved *two* methods of keeping the people in subjection. The first is violence. Nicholas Romanov I, nicknamed Nicholas of the Big Stick, and Nicholas II, the Bloody, demonstrated to the Russian people the maximum of what can and cannot be done in the way of these hangmen's practices. But there is another method, best developed by the British and French bourgeoisie, who "learned their lesson" in a series of great revolutions and revolutionary movements of the masses. It is the method of deception, flattery, fine phrases, promises by the million, petty sops, and concessions of the unessential while retaining the essential.

The peculiar feature of the present situation in Russia is the transition at a dizzy speed from the first method to the second, from violent oppression of the people to *flattering* and deceiving the people by promises. Vaska the Cat listens, but goes on eating.<sup>21</sup> Milyukov and Guchkov are holding power, they are protecting the profits of the capitalists, conducting an imperialist war in the interests of Russian and Anglo-French capital, and trying to get away with promises, declamation and bombastic statements in reply to the speeches of "cooks" like Chkheidze, Tsereteli and Steklov, who threaten, exhort, conjure, beseech, demand and proclaim. . . . Vaska the Cat listens, but goes on eating.

But from day to day trustful lack of reasoning and unreasoning trust will be falling away, especially among the proletarians and *poor* peasants, who are being taught by experience (by their social and economic position) to distrust the capitalists.

The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie "must" teach the people to trust the bourgeoisie. The proletarians must teach the people to distrust the bourgeoisie.

## REVOLUTIONARY DEFENCISM AND ITS CLASS SIGNIFICANCE

9. *Revolutionary defencism* must be regarded as the most important, the most striking manifestation of the petty-bourgeois wave that has swept over "nearly everything". It is the worst enemy of the further progress and success of the Russian revolution.

Those who have yielded on this point and have been unable to extricate themselves are lost to the revolution. But the masses yield in a different way from the leaders, and they extricate themselves *differently*, by a different course of development, by different means.

Revolutionary defencism is, on the one hand, a result of the deception of the masses by the bourgeoisie, a result of the trustful lack of reasoning on the part of the peasants and a section of the workers; it is, on the other, an expression of the interests and point of view of the small proprietor, who is to some extent interested in annexations and bank profits, and who "sacredly" guards the traditions of tsarism, which demoralised the Great Russians by making them do a hangman's work against the other peoples.

The bourgeoisie deceives the people by working on their noble pride in the revolution and by pretending that the *social and political* character of the war, as far as Russia is concerned, underwent a change because of this stage of the revolution, because of the substitution of the near-republic of Guchkov and Milyukov for

the tsarist monarchy. And the people believed it—for a time—largely owing to age-old prejudices, which made them look upon the other peoples of Russia, i.e., the non-Great Russians, as something in the nature of a property and private estate of the Great Russians. This vile demoralisation of the Great-Russian people by tsarism which taught them to regard the other peoples as something inferior, something belonging “by right” to Great Russia, could not disappear *instantly*.

What is required of us is the *ability* to explain to the masses that the social and political character of the war is determined not by the “good will” of individuals or groups, or even of nations, but by the position of the *class* which conducts the war, by the *class policy* of which the war is a continuation, by the *ties* of capital, which is the dominant economic force in modern society, by the *imperialist character* of international capital, by Russia’s dependence in finance, banking and diplomacy upon Britain, France, and so on. To explain this skilfully in a way the people would understand is *not easy*; none of us would be able to do it at once without committing errors.

But this, and only this, must be the aim or, rather, the message of our propaganda. The slightest concession to revolutionary defencism is a *betrayal of socialism*, a complete renunciation of *internationalism*, no matter by what fine phrases and “practical” considerations it may be justified.

The slogan “Down with the War!” is, of course, correct. But it fails to take into account the specific nature of the tasks of the present moment and the necessity of *approaching* the broad mass of the people *in a different way*. It reminds me of the slogan “Down with the Tsar!” with which the inexperienced agitator of the “good old days” went simply and directly to the countryside—and got a beating for his pains. The mass believers in revolutionary defencism are *honest*, not in the personal, but in the class sense, i.e., they belong to *classes* (workers and the peasant poor) which *in actual fact* have nothing to gain from annexations and the subjugation of other peoples. This is nothing like the bourgeois and the “intellectual” fraternity, who know very well that you *cannot* renounce annexations without renouncing the rule of capital, and who unscrupulously deceive the people with fine phrases, with unlimited promises and endless assurances.

The rank-and-file believer in defencism regards the matter in the simple way of the man in the street: “I don’t want annexations, but the Germans are ‘going for’ *me*, therefore I’m defending a just cause and not any kind of imperialist interests at all.” To a man like this it must be explained again and again that it is not a question of his personal wishes, but of mass, *class*, political relations and conditions, of the connection between the war

and the interests of capital and the international network of banks, and so forth. Only such a struggle against defencism will be serious and will promise success—perhaps not a very rapid success, but one that will be real and enduring.

### HOW CAN THE WAR BE ENDED?

10. The war cannot be ended “at will”. It cannot be ended by the decision of one of the belligerents. It cannot be ended by “sticking your bayonet into the ground”, as one soldier, a defencist, expressed it.

The war cannot be ended by an “agreement” among the socialists of the various countries, by the “action” of the proletarians of all countries, by the “will” of the peoples, and so forth. All the phrases of this kind, which fill the articles of the defencist, semi-defencist, and semi-internationalist papers as well as innumerable resolutions, appeals, manifestos, and the resolutions of the Soviet of Soldiers’ and Workers’ Deputies—all such phrases are nothing but idle, innocent and pious wishes of the petty bourgeois. There is nothing more harmful than phrases like “ascertaining the will of the peoples for peace”, like the *sequence* of revolutionary actions of the proletariat (after the Russian proletariat comes the turn of the German), etc. All this is Blancism, fond dreams, a playing at “political campaigning”, and in reality just a repetition of the fable of Vaska the Cat.

The war is not a product of the evil will of rapacious capitalists, although it is undoubtedly being fought *only* in their interests and they alone are being enriched by it. The war is a product of half a century of development of world capitalism and of its billions of threads and connections. It is *impossible* to slip out of the imperialist war and achieve a democratic, non-coercive peace without overthrowing the power of capital and transferring state power to *another* class, the proletariat.

The Russian revolution of February-March 1917 was the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war. This revolution took the *first* step towards ending the war; but it requires a *second* step, namely, the transfer of state power to the proletariat, to make the end of the war a *certainly*. This will be the beginning of a “break-through” on a world-wide scale, a break-through in the front of capitalist interests; and only by breaking through *this* front *can* the proletariat save mankind from the horrors of war and endow it with the blessings of peace.

It is directly to such a “break-through” in the front of capitalism that the Russian revolution has *already* brought the Russian proletariat by creating the Soviets of Workers’ Deputies.

## A NEW TYPE OF STATE EMERGING FROM OUR REVOLUTION

11. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies are not understood, not only in the sense that their class significance, their role in the *Russian*, revolution, is not clear to the majority. They are not understood also in the sense that they constitute a new form or rather a new *type of state*.

The most perfect, the most advanced type of bourgeois state is the *parliamentary democratic republic*: power is vested in parliament; the state machine, the apparatus and organ of administration, is of the customary kind: the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy—which in practice is undisplaceable, is privileged and stands *above* the people.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, however, revolutionary epochs have advanced a *higher* type of democratic state, a state which in certain respects, as Engels put it, ceases to be a state, is "no longer a state in the proper sense of the word".<sup>22</sup> This is a state of the Paris Commune type, one in which a standing army and police divorced from the people are *replaced* by the direct arming of the people themselves. It is *this feature* that constitutes the very essence of the Commune, which has been so misrepresented and slandered by the bourgeois writers, and to which has been erroneously ascribed, among other things, the intention of immediately "introducing" socialism.

This is the type of state which the Russian revolution *began* to create in 1905 and in 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies, united in an All-Russia Constituent Assembly of people's representatives or in a Council of Soviets, etc., is what is *already being realised* in our country now, at this juncture. It is being realised by the initiative of the nation's millions, who are creating a democracy on their own, *in their own way*, without waiting until the Cadet professors draft their legislative bills for a parliamentary bourgeois republic, or until the pedants and routine-worshippers of petty-bourgeois "Social-Democracy", like Mr. Plekhanov or Kautsky, stop distorting the Marxist teaching on the state.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognises the *need* for a state and for state power in the period of revolution in general, and in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in particular.

Marxism differs from the petty-bourgeois, opportunist "Social-Democratism" of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. in that it recognises that what is required during these two periods is *not* a state

of the usual parliamentary bourgeois republican type, but a state of the Paris Commune type.

The main distinctions between a state of the latter type and the old state are as follows.

It is quite easy (as history proves) to revert from a parliamentary bourgeois republic to a monarchy, for all the machinery of oppression—the army, the police, and the bureaucracy—is left intact. The Commune and the Soviets *smash* that machinery and do away with it.

The parliamentary bourgeois republic hampers and stifles the independent political life of the *masses*, their direct participation in the *democratic* organisation of the life of the state from the bottom up. The opposite is the case with the Soviets.

The latter reproduce the type of state which was being evolved by the Paris Commune and which Marx described as “the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour”.<sup>23</sup>

We are usually told that the Russian people are not yet prepared for the “introduction” of the Commune. This was the argument of the serf-owners when they claimed that the peasants were not prepared for emancipation. The Commune, i.e., the Soviets, does not “introduce”, does not intend to “introduce”, and must not introduce *any* reforms which have not absolutely matured both in economic reality and in the minds of the overwhelming majority of the people. The deeper the economic collapse and the crisis produced by the war, the more urgent becomes the need for the most perfect political form, which will *facilitate* the healing of the terrible wounds inflicted on mankind by the war. The less the organisational experience of the Russian people, the more resolutely must we *proceed* to organisational development by the *people themselves*, and not merely by the bourgeois politicians and “well-placed” bureaucrats.

The sooner we shed the old prejudices of pseudo-Marxism, a Marxism falsified by Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., the more actively we set about helping the people to organise Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies everywhere and immediately, and helping the latter to take life *in its entirety* under their control, and the longer Lvov and Co. delay the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the easier will it be for the people (through the medium of the Constituent Assembly, or independently of it, if Lvov delays its convocation too long) to cast their decision in favour of a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. Errors in the new work of organisational development by the people themselves are at first inevitable, but it is better to make mistakes and go forward than to *wait* until the professors of law summoned by Mr. Lvov draft their laws for the convoca-

tion of the Constituent Assembly, for the perpetuation of the parliamentary bourgeois republic and for the strangling of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.

If we organise ourselves and conduct our propaganda skilfully, not only the proletarians, but nine-tenths of the peasants will be opposed to the restoration of the police, will be opposed to an undisplaceable and privileged bureaucracy and to an army divorced from the people. And that is all the new type of state stands for.

12. The substitution of a people's militia for the police is a reform that follows from the entire course of the revolution and that is now being introduced in most parts of Russia. We must explain to the people that in most of the bourgeois revolutions of the usual type, this reform was always extremely short-lived, and that the bourgeoisie—even the most democratic and republican—restored the police of the old, tsarist type, a police divorced from the people, commanded by the bourgeoisie and capable of oppressing the people in every way.

There is only one way to *prevent* the restoration of the police, and that is to create a people's militia and to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by the arming of the entire people). Service in this militia should extend to all citizens of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five without exception, if these tentatively suggested age limits may be taken as indicating the participation of adolescents and old people. Capitalists must pay their workers, servants, etc., for days devoted to public service in the militia. Unless women are brought to take an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily and universal public service, it is no use talking about full and stable democracy, let alone socialism. And such "police" functions as care of the sick and of homeless children, food inspection, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on an equal footing with men, not merely nominally but in reality.

The tasks which the proletariat must put before the people in order to safeguard, consolidate and develop the revolution are prevention of the restoration of the police and enlistment of the organisational forces of the entire people in forming a people's militia.

## THE AGRARIAN AND NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

13. At the present moment we cannot say for certain whether a mighty agrarian revolution will develop in the Russian countryside in the near future. We cannot say exactly how profound the class cleavage is among the peasants, which has undoubtedly



grown more profound of late as a division into agricultural labourers, wage-workers and poor peasants ("semi-proletarians"), on the one hand, and wealthy and middle peasants (capitalists and petty capitalists), on the other. Such questions will be, and can be, decided only by experience.

Being the party of the proletariat, however, we are unquestionably in duty bound not only immediately to advance an agrarian (land) programme but also to advocate practical measures which can be immediately realised *in the interests* of the peasant agrarian revolution in Russia.

We must demand the nationalisation of *all* the land, i.e., that all the land in the state should become the property of the central state power. This power must fix the size, etc., of the resettlement land fund, pass legislation for the conservation of forests, for land improvement, etc., and absolutely prohibit any middlemen to interpose themselves between the owner of the land, i.e., the state, and the tenant, i.e., the tiller (prohibit all subletting of land). However, the *disposal* of the land, the determination of the *local regulations* governing ownership and tenure of land, must in no case be placed in the hands of bureaucrats and officials, but wholly and exclusively in the hands of the regional and local *Soviets of Peasants' Deputies*.

In order to improve grain production techniques and increase output, and in order to develop rational cultivation on a large scale under public control, we must strive within the peasants' committees to secure the transformation of every confiscated landed estate into a large model farm controlled by the *Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies*.

In order to counteract the petty-bourgeois phrase-mongering and the policy prevailing among the Socialist-Revolutionaries, particularly the idle talk about "subsistence" standards or "labour" standards, "socialisation of the land", etc., the party of the proletariat must make it clear that small-scale farming under commodity production *cannot* save mankind from poverty and oppression.

Without necessarily splitting the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies at once, the party of the proletariat must explain the need for organising separate Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and separate Soviets of deputies from the poor (semi-proletarian) peasants, or, at least, for holding regular separate conferences of deputies of *this class status* in the shape of separate groups or parties within the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. Otherwise all the honeyed petty-bourgeois talk of the Narodniks<sup>24</sup> regarding the peasants in general will serve as a shield for the deception of the propertyless mass by the wealthy peasants, who are merely a variety of *capitalists*.

To counteract the bourgeois-liberal or purely bureaucratic sermons preached by many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, who advise the peasants not to seize the landed estates and not to start the agrarian reform pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the party of the proletariat must urge the peasants to carry out the agrarian reform at once on their own, and to confiscate the landed estates immediately, upon the decisions of the peasants' deputies in the localities.

At the same time, it is most important to insist on the necessity of *increasing* food production for the soldiers at the front and for the towns, and on the absolute inadmissibility of causing any damage or injury to livestock, implements, machinery, buildings, etc.

14. As regards the national question, the proletarian party first of all must advocate the proclamation and immediate realisation of complete freedom of secession from Russia for all the nations and peoples who were oppressed by tsarism, or who were forcibly joined to, or forcibly kept within the boundaries of, the state, i.e., annexed.

All statements, declarations and manifestos concerning renunciation of annexations that are not accompanied by the realisation of the right of secession in practice, are nothing but bourgeois deception of the people, or else pious petty-bourgeois wishes.

The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible, for this is to the advantage of the working people; it strives to *draw* nations *closer together*, and bring about their *further fusion*; but it desires to achieve this aim not by violence, but exclusively through a free fraternal union of the workers and the working people of all nations.

The more democratic the Russian republic, and the more successfully it organises itself into a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, the more powerful will be the force of *voluntary* attraction to such a republic on the part of the working people of *all* nations.

Complete freedom of secession, the broadest local (and national) autonomy, and elaborate guarantees of the rights of national minorities—this is the programme of the revolutionary proletariat.

### **NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND CAPITALIST SYNDICATES**

15. Under no circumstances can the party of the proletariat set itself the aim of "introducing" socialism in a country of small peasants so long as the overwhelming majority of the population has not come to realise the need for a socialist revolution.

But only bourgeois sophists, hiding behind "near-Marxist"

catchwords, can deduce from this truth a justification of the policy of postponing immediate revolutionary measures, the time for which is fully ripe; measures which *have been* frequently resorted to during the war by a number of bourgeois states, and which are absolutely indispensable in order to combat impending total economic disorganisation and famine.

Such measures as the nationalisation of the land, of all the banks and capitalist syndicates, or, at least, the *immediate* establishment of the *control* of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies, etc., over them—measures which do not in any way constitute the “introduction” of socialism—must be absolutely insisted on, and, whenever possible, carried out in a revolutionary way. Without such measures, which are only steps towards socialism, and which are perfectly feasible economically, it will be impossible to heal the wounds caused by the war and to avert the impending collapse; and the party of the revolutionary proletariat will never hesitate to lay hands on the fabulous profits of the capitalists and bankers, who are enriching themselves on the war in a particularly scandalous manner.

## THE SITUATION WITHIN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

16. The international obligations of the working class of Russia are precisely now coming to the forefront with particular force.

Only lazy people do not swear by internationalism these days. Even the chauvinist defencists, even Plekhanov and Potresov, even Kerensky, call themselves internationalists. It becomes the duty of the proletarian party *all the more* urgently, therefore, to clearly, precisely and definitely counterpose internationalism in deed to internationalism in word.

Mere appeals to the workers of all countries, empty assurances of devotion to internationalism, direct or indirect attempts to fix a “sequence” of action by the revolutionary proletariat in the various belligerent countries, laborious efforts to conclude “agreements” between the socialists of the belligerent countries *on the question* of the revolutionary struggle, all the fuss over the summoning of socialist congresses *for the purpose* of a peace campaign, etc., etc.—no matter how sincere the authors of such ideas, attempts, and plans may be—amount, as far as their *objective* significance is concerned, to mere phrase-mongering, and *at best* are innocent and pious wishes, fit only to conceal the *deception* of the people by the chauvinists. The *French* social-chauvinists, who are the most adroit and accomplished in methods of parliamentary hocus-pocus, have long since broken the record for

ranting and resonant pacifist and internationalist phrases *coupled with* the incredibly brazen betrayal of socialism and the International, the acceptance of posts in governments which conduct the imperialist war, the voting of credits *or loans* (as Chkheidze, Skobelev, Tsereteli and Steklov have been doing recently in Russia), opposition to the revolutionary struggle in *their own country*, etc., etc.

Good people often forget the brutal and savage setting of the imperialist world war. This setting does not tolerate phrases, and mocks at innocent and pious wishes.

There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the development of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own country*, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle*, this, *and only this*, line, in *every country* without exception.

Everything else is deception and Manilovism.<sup>25</sup>

During the two odd years of the war the international socialist and working-class movement in *every country* has evolved three trends. Whoever ignores *reality* and refuses to recognise the existence of these three trends, to analyse them, to fight consistently for the trend that is really internationalist, is doomed to impotence, helplessness and errors.

The three trends are:

1) The social-chauvinists, i.e., socialists in word and chauvinists in deed, people who recognise “defence of the fatherland” in an imperialist war (and above all in the present imperialist war).

These people are our *class* enemies. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

They are the majority of the official leaders of the official Social-Democratic parties in *all countries*—Plekhanov and Co. in Russia, the Scheidemanns in Germany, Renaudel, Guesde and Sembat in France, Bissolati and Co. in Italy, Hyndman, the Fabians<sup>26</sup> and the Labourites (the leaders of the “Labour Party”<sup>27</sup>) in Britain, Branting and Co. in Sweden, Troelstra and his party in Holland. Stauning and his party in Denmark, Victor Berger and the other “defenders of the fatherland” in America, and so forth.

2) The second trend, known as the “Centre”, consists of people who vacillate between the social-chauvinists and the true internationalists.

The “Centre” all vow and declare that they are Marxists and internationalists, that they are for peace, for bringing every kind of “pressure” to bear upon the governments, for “demanding” in every way that their own government should “ascertain the will of the people for peace”, that they are for all sorts of peace campaigns, for peace without annexations, etc., etc.—*and for*

*peace with the social-chauvinists.* The "Centre" is for "unity", the Centre is opposed to a split.

The "Centre" is a realm of honeyed petty-bourgeois phrases, of internationalism in word and cowardly opportunism and fawning on the social-chauvinists in deed.

The crux of the matter is that the "Centre" is not convinced of the necessity for a revolution against one's own government; it does not preach revolution; it does not carry on a whole-hearted revolutionary struggle; and in order to evade such a struggle it resorts to the tritest ultra-"Marxist"-sounding *excuses*.

The social-chauvinists are our *class enemies*, they are *bourgeois* within the working-class movement. They represent a stratum, or groups, or sections of the working class which *objectively* have been bribed by the bourgeoisie (by better wages, positions of honour, etc.), and which help *their own* bourgeoisie to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and to fight *for* the division of the capitalist spoils.

The "Centre" consists of routine-worshippers, eroded by the canker of legality, corrupted by the parliamentary atmosphere, etc., bureaucrats accustomed to snug positions and soft jobs. Historically and economically speaking, they are not a *separate* stratum but represent only a *transition* from a past phase of the working-class movement—the phase between 1871 and 1914, which gave much that is valuable to the proletariat, particularly in the indispensable art of slow, sustained and systematic organisational work on a large and very large scale—to a new *phase* that became *objectively* essential with the outbreak of the first imperialist world war, which inaugurated *the era of social revolution*.

The chief leader and spokesman of the "Centre" is Karl Kautsky, the most outstanding authority in the Second International (1889-1914), since August 1914 a model of utter bankruptcy as a Marxist, the embodiment of unheard-of spinelessness, and the most wretched vacillations and betrayals. This "Centrist" trend includes Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and the so-called workers' or labour group<sup>28</sup> in the Reichstag; in France it includes Longuet, Pressemane and the so-called minoritaires<sup>29</sup> (Mensheviks) in general; in Britain, Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and many other leaders of the Independent Labour Party,<sup>30</sup> and some leaders of the British Socialist Party<sup>31</sup>; Morris Hillquit and many others in the United States; Jurati, Trèves, Modigliani and others in Italy; Robert Grimm and others in Switzerland; Victor Adler and Co. in Austria; the party of the Organising Committee, Axelrod, Martov, Chkheidze, Tsereteli and others in Russia, and so forth.

Naturally, at times individuals unconsciously drift from the social-chauvinist to the "Centrist" position, and vice versa. Every

Marxist knows that classes are distinct, even though individuals may move freely from one class to another; similarly, *trends* in political life are distinct in spite of the fact that individuals may change freely from one trend to another, and in spite of all attempts and efforts to *amalgamate* trends.

3) The third trend, that of the true internationalists, is best represented by the "Zimmerwald Left".<sup>32</sup> (We reprint as a supplement its manifesto of September 1915, to enable the reader to learn of the inception of this trend at first hand.)

Its distinctive feature is its complete break with both social-chauvinism and "Centrism", and its gallant revolutionary struggle against *its own* imperialist government and *its own* imperialist bourgeoisie. Its principle is: "Our chief enemy is at home." It wages a ruthless struggle against honeyed social-pacifist phrases (a social-pacifist is a socialist in word and a bourgeois pacifist in deed; bourgeois pacifists dream of an everlasting peace *without* the overthrow of the yoke and domination of capital) and against all *subterfuges* employed to deny the possibility, or the appropriateness, or the timeliness of a proletarian revolutionary struggle and of a proletarian socialist revolution *in connection* with the present war.

The most outstanding representative of this trend in Germany is the Spartacus group or the *Internationale* group,<sup>33</sup> to which Karl Liebknecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is a most celebrated representative of this trend and of the *new*, and genuine, proletarian International.

Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soldiers of Germany to *turn their guns* against *their own* government. Karl Liebknecht did that openly from the rostrum of parliament (the Reichstag). He then went to a demonstration in Potsdamer Platz, one of the largest public squares in Berlin, with illegally printed leaflets proclaiming the slogan "Down with the Government!" He was arrested and sentenced to *hard labour*. He is now serving his term in a German convict prison, like *hundreds*, if not thousands, of other *true* German socialists who have been imprisoned for their anti-war activities.

Karl Liebknecht in his speeches and letters mercilessly attacked not only *his own* Plekhanovs and Potresovs (Scheidmanns, Legiens, Davids and Co.), *but also his own Centrists*, his own Chkhaidzes and Tseretelis (Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and Co.).

Karl Liebknecht and his friend Otto Rühle, two out of one hundred and ten deputies, violated discipline, destroyed the "unity" with the "Centre" and the chauvinists, and *went against all of them*. Liebknecht *alone* represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. *All* the rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a

member and one of the leaders of the Spartacus group), is a "*stinking corpse*".

Another group of true internationalists in Germany is that of the Bremen paper *Arbeiterpolitik*.<sup>34</sup>

Closest to the internationalists in deed are: in France, Lorient and his friends (Bourderon and Merheim have slid down to social-pacifism), as well as the Frenchman Henri Guilbeaux, who publishes in Geneva the journal *Demain*<sup>35</sup>; in Britain, the newspaper *The Trade Unionist*,<sup>36</sup> and some of the members of the British Socialist Party and of the Independent Labour Party (for instance, Russel Williams, who openly called for a break with the leaders who have *betrayed* socialism), the Scottish socialist school-teacher *MacLean*, who was sentenced to *hard labour* by the bourgeois government of Britain for his revolutionary fight against the war, and hundreds of British socialists who are in jail for the same offence. They, and they alone, are internationalists *in deed*. In the United States, the Socialist Labour Party<sup>37</sup> and those within the opportunist Socialist Party<sup>38</sup> who in January 1917 began publication of the paper, *The Internationalist*<sup>39</sup>; in Holland, the Party of the "Tribunists" which publishes the paper *De Tribune* (Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, Wijnkoop, and Henriette Roland-Holst, who, although Centrist at Zimmerwald, has now joined our ranks)<sup>40</sup>; in Sweden, the Party of the Young, or the Left,<sup>41</sup> led by Lindhagen, Tute Nerman, Carlsson, Ström and Z. Höglund, who at Zimmerwald was personally active in the organisation of the "Zimmerwald Left", and who is now in prison for his revolutionary fight against the war; in Denmark, Trier and his friends who have left the now purely *bourgeois* "Social-Democratic" Party of Denmark, headed by the Minister Stauning; in Bulgaria, the "Tessnyaki"<sup>42</sup>; in Italy, the Marxist are Constantino Lazzari, secretary of the party, and Serrati, editor of the central organ, *Avanti!*<sup>43</sup>; in Poland, Radek, Hanecki and other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the "Regional Executive", and Rosa Luxemburg, Tyszka and other leaders of the Social-Democrats united under the "Chief Executive"<sup>44</sup>; in Switzerland, those of the Left who drew up the argument for the "referendum" (January 1917) in order to fight the social-chauvinists and the "Centre" in *their own country* and who at the Zurich Cantonal Socialist Convention, held at Töss on February 11, 1917, moved a consistently revolutionary resolution against the war<sup>45</sup>; in Austria, the young Left-wing friends of Friedrich Adler, who acted partly through the Karl Marx Club in Vienna, now closed by the arch-reactionary Austrian Government, which is ruining Adler's life for his heroic though ill-considered shooting at a minister, and so on.

It is not a question of shades of opinion, which certainly exist even among the Lefts. It is a question of *trend*. The thing is that

it is not easy to be an internationalist in deed during a terrible imperialist war. Such people are few; but it is on such people *alone* that the future of socialism depends; they *alone* are *the leaders of the people*, and not their corrupters.

The distinction between the reformists and the revolutionaries, among the Social-Democrats, and socialists generally, was objectively bound to undergo a change under the conditions of the imperialist war. Those who confine themselves to "demanding" that the bourgeois governments should conclude peace or "ascertain the will of the peoples for peace", etc., are *actually* slipping into reforms. For, objectively, *the problem of the war* can be solved only in a *revolutionary way*.

There is no possibility of this war ending in a democratic, non-coercive peace or of the people being relieved of the burden of *billions* paid in interest to the capitalists, who have made fortunes out of the war, except through a revolution of the proletariat.

The most varied reforms can and must be demanded of the bourgeois governments, but one cannot, without sinking to Manilovism and reformism, demand that people and classes entangled by the thousands of threads of imperialist capital should *tear* those threads. And unless they are torn, all talk of a war against war is idle and deceitful prattle.

The "Kautskyites", the "Centre", are revolutionaries in word and reformists in deed, they are internationalists in word and accomplices of the social-chauvinists in deed.

### THE COLLAPSE OF THE ZIMMERWALD INTERNATIONAL.— THE NEED FOR FOUNDING A THIRD INTERNATIONAL

17. From the very outset, the Zimmerwald International adopted a vacillating, "Kautskyite", "Centrist" position, which immediately compelled the *Zimmerwald Left* to dissociate itself, to separate itself from the rest, and to issue *its own* manifesto (published in Switzerland in Russian, German and French).

The chief shortcoming of the Zimmerwald International, and the cause of its *collapse* (for politically and ideologically it has already collapsed), was its vacillation and indecision on such a momentous issue of *crucial* practical significance as that of breaking completely with social-chauvinism and the old social-chauvinist International, headed by Vandervelde and Huysmans at The Hague (Holland), etc.

It is not as yet known in Russia that the Zimmerwald majority *are nothing but Kautskyites*. Yet this is the fundamental fact, one which cannot be ignored, and which is now generally known in



Western Europe. Even that chauvinist, that extreme German chauvinist, Heilmann, editor of the ultra-chauvinistic *Chemnitzer Volksstimme* and contributor to Parvus's ultra-chauvinistic *Glocke*<sup>46</sup> (a "Social-Democrat", of course, and an ardent partisan of Social-Democratic "unity"), was compelled to acknowledge in the press that the Centre, or "Kautskyism", and the *Zimmerwald* majority were one and the same thing.

This fact was definitely established at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917. Although social-pacifism was condemned by the Kienthal Manifesto,<sup>47</sup> the *whole* Zimmerwald Right, the *entire* Zimmerwald majority, sank to social-pacifism: Kautsky and Co. in a series of utterances in January and February 1917; Bourderon and Merrheim in France, who cast their votes *in unanimity* with the social-chauvinists for the pacifist resolutions of the Socialist Party (December 1916)<sup>48</sup> and of the Confédération Générale du Travail (the national organisation of the French trade unions, also in December 1916); Turati and Co. in Italy, where the *entire* party took up a social-pacifist position, while Turati himself, in a speech delivered on December 17, 1916, "slipped" (not by accident, of course) into *nationalist* phrases whitewashing the imperialist war.

In January 1917, the chairman of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, Robert Grimm, joined the social-chauvinists in *his own* party (Greulich, Pflüger, Gustav Müller and others) *against* the internationalists in deed.

At two conferences of *Zimmerwaldists* from various countries in January and February 1917, this equivocal, double-faced behaviour of the Zimmerwald majority was formally stigmatised by the Left internationalists of several countries: by Münzenberg, secretary of the international youth organisation and editor of the excellent internationalist publication *Die Jugendinternationale*<sup>49</sup>; by Zinoviev, representative of the Central Committee of our Party; by K. Radek of the Polish Social-Democratic Party (the "Regional Executive"), and by Hartstein, a German Social-Democrat and member of the Spartacus group.

Much is given to the Russian proletariat; nowhere in the world has the working class yet succeeded in developing so much revolutionary energy as in Russia. But to whom much is given, of him much is required.

The Zimmerwald bog can no longer be tolerated. We must not, for the sake of the Zimmerwald "Kautskyites", continue the semi-alliance with the chauvinist International of the Plekhanovs and Scheidemanns. We must break with this International immediately. We must remain in Zimmerwald *only* for purposes of information.

It is we who must found, and right now, without delay, a *new*, revolutionary, proletarian International, or rather, we must not

fear to acknowledge publicly that this new International is *already established* and operating.

This is the International of those "internationalists in deed" whom I precisely listed above. They and they alone are representatives of the revolutionary, internationalist mass, and not their corrupters.

And if socialists of *that type* are few, let every Russian worker ask himself whether there were many really class-conscious revolutionaries in Russia *on the eve* of the February-March revolution of 1917.

It is not a question of numbers, but of giving correct expression to the ideas and policies of the truly revolutionary proletariat. The thing is not to "proclaim" internationalism, but to be able to be an internationalist in deed, even when times are most trying.

Let us not deceive ourselves with hopes of agreements and international congresses. As long as the imperialist war is on, international intercourse is held in the iron vise of the military dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. If even the "republican" Milyukov, who is obliged to tolerate the parallel government of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, *did not allow Fritz Platten*, the Swiss socialist, secretary of the party, an internationalist and participant in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, to enter Russia in April 1917, in spite of the fact that Platten has a Russian wife and was on his way to visit his wife's relatives, and in spite of the fact that he had taken part in the revolution of 1905 in Riga, for which he had been confined in a Russian prison, had given bail to the tsarist government for his release and wished to recover that bail—if the "republican" Milyukov could *do* such a thing in April 1917 in Russia, one can judge what value can be put on the promises and assurances, the phrases and declarations of the bourgeoisie on the subject of peace without annexations, and so on.

And the arrest of Trotsky by the British Government? And the refusal to allow Martov to leave Switzerland, and the attempt to lure him to Britain, where Trotsky's fate awaits him?

Let us harbour no illusions. We must not deceive ourselves.

To "wait" for international congresses or conferences is simply to *betray* internationalism, since it has been shown that even from Stockholm neither socialists loyal to internationalism *nor even their letters* are allowed to come here, although this is quite possible and although a ferocious military censorship exists.

Our Party must not "wait", but must immediately *found* a Third International. Hundreds of socialists imprisoned in Germany and Britain will then heave a sigh of relief, thousands and thousands of German workers who are now holding strikes and

demonstrations that are frightening that scoundrel and brigand, Wilhelm, will learn from *illegal* leaflets of our decision, of our fraternal confidence in Karl Liebknecht, and in him alone, of *our* decision to fight "revolutionary defencism" *even now*; they will read this and be strengthened in their revolutionary internationalism.

To whom much is given, of him much is required. No other country in the world is as free as Russia is *now*. Let us make use of this freedom, not to advocate support for the bourgeoisie, or bourgeois "revolutionary defencism", but in a bold, honest, proletarian, Liebknecht way to *found the Third International*, an International uncompromisingly hostile both to the social-chauvinist traitors and to the vacillating "Centrists".

18. After what has been said, there is no need to waste many words explaining that the amalgamation of Social-Democrats in Russia is out of the question.

It is better to remain with one friend only, like Liebknecht, and *that means remaining with the revolutionary proletariat*, than to entertain even for a moment any thought of amalgamation with the party of the Organising Committee, with Chkheidze and Tsereteli, who can tolerate a bloc with Potresov in *Rabochaya Gazeta*,<sup>50</sup> who voted for the loan in the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies,<sup>51</sup> and who have sunk to "defencism".

Let the dead bury their dead.

Whoever wants to *help* the waverers must first stop wavering himself.

### WHAT SHOULD BE THE NAME OF OUR PARTY — ONE THAT WILL BE CORRECT SCIENTIFICALLY AND HELP TO CLARIFY THE MIND OF THE PROLETARIAT POLITICALLY?

19. I now come to the final point, the name of our Party. We must call ourselves the *Communist Party*—just as Marx and Engels called themselves

We must repeat that we are Marxists and that we take as our basis the *Communist Manifesto*, which has been distorted and betrayed by the Social-Democrats on two main points: (1) the working men have no country: "defence of the fatherland" in an imperialist war is a betrayal of socialism; and (2) the Marxist doctrine of the state has been distorted by the Second International.

The name "Social-Democracy" is *scientifically* incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular, in the *Critique of the*

*Gotha Programme* in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894.<sup>52</sup> From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism, i.e., to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual. Our Party looks farther ahead: socialism must inevitably evolve gradually into communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

That is my first argument.

Here is the second: the second part of the name of our Party (*Social-Democrats*) is also scientifically incorrect. Democracy is a form of *state*, whereas we Marxists are opposed to *every kind* of state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Plekhanov, Kautsky and their like, have vulgarised and distorted Marxism.

Marxism differs from anarchism in that it recognises *the need for a state* for the purpose of the transition to socialism: but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) *not a state of the type* of the usual parliamentary bourgeois-democratic republic, but a state like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

My third argument: *living reality*, the revolution, has *already actually* established in our country, albeit in a weak and embryonic form, precisely this new type of "state", which is not a state in the proper sense of the word.

This is *already* a matter of the practical action of the people, and not merely a theory of the leaders.

The state in the proper sense of the term is domination over the people by contingents of armed men divorced from the people.

Our *emergent* new state is also a state, for we too need contingents of armed men, we too need the *strictest* order, and must *ruthlessly* crush by force all attempts at either a tsarist or a Guchkov-bourgeois counter-revolution.

But our *emergent* new state is *no longer* a state in the proper sense of the term, for in some parts of Russia these contingents of armed men are *the masses themselves*, the entire people, and not certain privileged persons placed over the people, and divorced from the people, and for all practical purposes undisplaceable.

We must look forward, and not backward to the usual bourgeois type of democracy, which consolidated the rule of the bourgeoisie with the aid of the old, *monarchist* organs of administration, the police, the army and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the emergent new democracy, which is already ceasing to be a democracy, for democracy means the

domination of the people, and the armed people cannot dominate themselves.

The term democracy is not only scientifically incorrect when applied to a Communist Party; it has now, since March 1917, simply become *blinkers* put on the eyes of the revolutionary people and *preventing* them from boldly and freely, on their own initiative, building up the new: the Soviets of Workers', Peasants', and all other Deputies, as *the sole power* in the "state" and as the harbinger of the "withering away" of the state *in every form*.

My fourth argument: we must reckon with the actual situation in which socialism finds itself internationally.

It is not what it was during the years 1871 to 1914, when Marx and Engels knowingly put up with the inaccurate, opportunist term "Social-Democracy". For *in those days*, after the defeat of the Paris Commune, history made slow organisational and educational work the task of the day. Nothing else was possible. The anarchists were then (as they are now) fundamentally wrong not only theoretically, but also economically and politically. The anarchists misjudged the character of the times; for they failed to understand the world situation: the worker of Britain corrupted by imperialist profits, the Commune defeated in Paris, the recent (1871) triumph of the bourgeois national movement in Germany, the age-long sleep of semi-feudal Russia.

Marx and Engels gauged the times accurately; they understood the international situation; they understood that the approach to the beginning of the social revolution must be *slow*.

We, in our turn, must also understand the specific features and tasks of the new era. Let us not imitate those sorry Marxists of whom Marx said: "I have sown dragon's teeth and harvested fleas."<sup>53</sup>

The objective inevitability of capitalism which grew into imperialism brought about the imperialist war. The war has brought mankind to the *brink of a precipice*, to the brink of the destruction of civilisation, of the brutalisation and destruction of more millions, countless millions, of human beings.

The *only* way out is through a proletarian revolution.

At the very moment when such a revolution is beginning, when it is taking its first hesitant, groping steps, steps betraying too great a confidence in the bourgeoisie, at such a moment the majority (that is the truth, that is a fact) of the "Social-Democratic" leaders, of the "Social-Democratic" parliamentarians, of the "Social-Democratic" newspapers—and these are precisely the *organs* that influence the people—have *deserted* socialism, have *betrayed* socialism and have gone over to the side of "their own" national bourgeoisie.

The people have been confused, led astray and deceived by *these* leaders.

And we shall aid and abet that deception if we retain the old and out-of-date Party name, which is as decayed as the Second International!

Granted that "many" workers *understand* Social-Democracy in an honest way; but it is time to learn how to distinguish the subjective from the objective.

Subjectively, such Social-Democratic workers are most loyal leaders of the proletarians.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old name of our Party *makes it easier* to fool the people and *impedes* the onward march; for at every step, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see *leaders*, i.e., people whose voices carry farthest and whose actions are most conspicuous; yet they are all "would-be Social-Democrats", they are all "for unity" with the betrayers of socialism, with the social-chauvinists; and they are all presenting for payment the old bills issued by "Social-Democracy". . . .

And what are the arguments against? . . . We'll be confused with the Anarchist-Communists, they say. . . .

Why are we not afraid of being confused with the Social-Nationalists, the Social-Liberals, or the Radical-Socialists, the foremost bourgeois party in the French Republic and the most adroit in the bourgeois deception of the people? . . . We are told: The people are used to it, the workers have come to "love" *their* Social-Democratic Party.

That is the only argument. But it is an argument that dismisses the science of Marxism, the tasks of the morrow in the revolution, the objective position of world socialism, the shameful collapse of the Second International, and the harm done to the practical cause by the packs of "would-be Social-Democrats" who surround the proletarians.

It is an argument of routinism, an argument of inertia, an argument of stagnation.

But we are out to rebuild the world. We are out to put an end to the imperialist world war into which hundreds of millions of people have been drawn and in which the interests of billions and billions of capital are involved, a war which cannot end in a truly democratic peace without the greatest proletarian revolution in the history of mankind.

Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loth to cast off the "dear old" soiled shirt. . . .

But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt and to put on clean linen.

Petrograd, April 10, 1917

## POSTSCRIPT

My pamphlet has become out of date owing to the general economic disorganisation and the inefficiency of the St. Petersburg presses. The pamphlet was written on April 10, 1917, today is May 28, and it has not come out yet!

It was written as a *draft* platform to propagandise my views *before* the All-Russia Conference of our Party, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bolsheviks. The pamphlet was typed in several copies and handed out to Party members before and during the Conference so that it did its job in part. But the Conference took place from April 24 to April 29, 1917,<sup>54</sup> its resolutions have long since been published (see supplement to *Soldat-skaya Pravda* No. 13<sup>55</sup>) and the attentive reader will have noticed that my pamphlet often served as the original draft of those resolutions.

It is left for me to express the hope that the pamphlet will still be of some value because of its connection with those resolutions and because it explains them, and to deal here with two points.

I suggested on page 27 that we remain in Zimmerwald only for purposes of information.\* The Conference did not agree with me on this point, and I had to vote against the resolution on the International. It is now becoming obvious that the Conference made a mistake and that the course taken by events will soon correct it. By remaining in Zimmerwald we (even against our will) are helping delay the creation of the Third International: we are indirectly hampering its foundation, being burdened with the dead ballast of the ideologically and politically dead Zimmerwald.

In the eyes of the working-class parties of the whole world, our Party's position is now such that it is our *duty* to *found* a

Third International without delay. *Today* there is nobody but us to do it, and procrastination can only do harm. If we remain in Zimmerwald for information only, we shall have our hands freed to establish the new International (and at the same time be able to *use* Zimmerwald should circumstances make it possible).

Because of the mistake made by the Conference, we must now wait passively, at least until July 5, 1917 (the date set for the Zimmerwald Conference, provided it is not postponed *again!* It has already been postponed once. . .).<sup>56</sup>

The decision unanimously adopted by the Central Committee of our Party after the Conference and published in *Pravda* No. 55,<sup>57</sup> on May 12, has, however, gone half-way towards correcting the mistake; it has been resolved that we shall walk out of Zimmerwald if they decide to confer with ministers.\* I express the hope that the other half of the mistake will be speedily remedied, as soon as we convene the first international conference of Left (the "third trend", the "internationalists in deed", see above, pp. 23-25\*\*).

The second point I must deal with is the formation of the "coalition cabinet" on May 6, 1917.<sup>58</sup> On this point the pamphlet may *seem* to be particularly out of date.

But actually on this of all points it is not out of date at all. It is based *wholly* on the *class* analysis, a thing that the Mensheviks and Narodniks,<sup>59</sup> who have provided six ministers as hostages to the ten capitalist ministers, stand in deadly fear of. And it is because the pamphlet is based wholly on a class analysis that it is not out of date—the only change made by Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. joining the cabinet was an *insignificant* one in the *form* of the agreement between the Petrograd Soviet and the capitalist government, and I deliberately stressed in my pamphlet (on page 8) that "I am referring not so much to the formal agreement as to actual support."\*\*\*

With each passing day it is becoming clearer that Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. are nothing more than hostages to the capitalists, that the "renewed" government is neither willing nor able to carry out any of its abundant promises either in foreign or domestic policies. Chernov, Tsereteli and Co. have committed political suicide by turning into assistants of the capitalists, into people who are actually strangling the revolution; Kerensky has come so low as to use force against the masses (cf. p. 9 of the pamphlet: "Guchkov is still only threatening to employ violence

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 388 —Ed.

\*\* See pp. 54-56 of the present volume.—Ed.

\*\*\* See p. 41 of the present volume.—Ed.



against the mass<sup>77\*</sup> but Kerensky *had to* carry out those threats).<sup>60</sup> Chernov, Tsereteli and Co. have killed themselves and their parties—the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries—politically. The people will realise this more and more clearly as the days go by.

The coalition cabinet is only a passing moment in the development of the fundamental class contradictions of our revolution briefly analysed in the pamphlet. This situation cannot last long—we must either go backward to counter-revolution all along the line or forward to the transfer of state power to other classes. At a time of revolution, when the imperialist world war is in progress, we cannot stand still.

*N. Lenin*

St. Petersburg, May 28, 1917

Written on April 10 (23), 1917,  
the postscript was written on May 28 (June 10),  
1917

First published in September 1917  
as a pamphlet by Priboi Publishers,  
Petrograd

*Collected Works* Vol 24,  
pp 55-91

---

# **THE SEVENTH (APRIL) ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**

**APRIL 24-29 (MAY 7-12), 1917**

## **I SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE APRIL 24 (MAY 7)**

Comrades, we are assembled here as the first conference of the proletarian party, in conditions of the Russian revolution and a developing world revolution as well. The time is approaching when the assertion of the founders of scientific socialism, and the unanimous forecast of the socialists who gathered at the Basle Congress, that world war would inevitably lead to revolution, is being everywhere proved correct.

In the nineteenth century Marx and Engels, following the proletarian movements in various countries and analysing the possible prospects for a social revolution, repeatedly stated that the roles would, in general, be distributed among these countries in proportion to, and in accordance with, their historically conditioned national features. They expressed their idea briefly as: The French worker will begin, the German will finish it.

The great honour of beginning the revolution has fallen to the Russian proletariat. But the Russian proletariat must not forget that its movement and revolution are only part of a world revolutionary proletarian movement, which in Germany, for example, is gaining momentum with every passing day. Only from this angle can we define our tasks.

I declare the All-Russia Conference open. Please nominate your candidates for election to the Presiding Committee.

A brief report published  
May 12 (April 29), 1917  
in *Sotsial-Demokrat* No. 43

First published in full in 1921  
in N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov), *Works*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
p. 227

## 2 REPORT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION APRIL 24 (MAY 7)

### MINUTES

Comrades, in evaluating the current situation I have to deal with an exceedingly broad subject, which, to my mind, falls into three parts. First, the estimate of the political situation proper here in Russia, our attitude towards the government and the dual power that has come into existence; second, our attitude towards the war; third, the international background to the working-class movement, a situation which has brought the workers of the world face to face with a socialist revolution.

I think, I shall have to deal only in brief with some of the points. Furthermore, I am going to submit to you a draft resolution on all these questions with this reservation, however, that, owing to the extreme lack of facilities and to the political crisis that has been created here in Petrograd, we were unable to have discussions of the resolution, or to communicate it in good time to the local comrades. I repeat, then, that these are only preliminary drafts, designed to make work easier in the committee and concentrate it on a few of the most essential questions.

I begin with the first question. If I am not mistaken, the Moscow Conference adopted the same resolution as the Petrograd City Conference. (*Interruption*: "With amendments.") I have not seen the amendments, and I cannot pass an opinion. But since the Petrograd resolution was published in *Pravda*, I shall take it for granted, if no one objects, that it is known to everybody here. I submit this as a draft resolution to the present All-Russia Conference.

Most of the parties in the petty-bourgeois bloc controlling the Petrograd Soviet represent our policy, in contrast to their own, as a rash policy. What distinguishes our policy is our demand above all for a precise class analysis of current events. The chief sin of the petty-bourgeois bloc is that it resorts to empty phrases to conceal from the people the truth about the government's class character.

If the Moscow comrades have any amendments, they may present them now.

(*Reads the resolution of the Petrograd City Conference on the attitude towards the Provisional Government.*)

"Considering:

"(1) that the Provisional Government, by its class character, is the organ of landowner and bourgeois domination;

"(2) that the Provisional Government and the classes it repre-

sents are bound with indissoluble economic and political ties to Russian and Anglo-French imperialism;

"(3) that the Provisional Government is carrying out its proclaimed programme only partially, and only under pressure of the revolutionary proletariat and, to some extent, of the petty bourgeoisie;

"(4) that the forces of bourgeois and landowner counter-revolution, now being organised, have already, under cover of the Provisional Government and with the latter's obvious connivance, launched an attack on revolutionary democracy;

"(5) that the Provisional Government is avoiding fixing the date for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, preventing the arming of the people as a whole, opposing the transfer of all the land to the people, foisting upon it the landowners' way of settling the agrarian question, obstructing the introduction of an eight-hour workday, condoning counter-revolutionary propaganda in the army (by Guchkov and Co.), rallying the high-ranking officers against the soldiers, etc. . . ."

I have read the first part of the resolution giving a class definition of the Provisional Government. There are scarcely any essential differences between this resolution and that of the Moscow comrades, as far as it is possible to judge from the latter's text alone. But the general definition of the government as counter-revolutionary is, in my opinion, incorrect. If we speak in general terms, we must specify which revolution we mean. As far as the bourgeois revolution is concerned, this cannot be said, because that revolution is already completed. As far as the proletarian and peasant revolution is concerned, such a statement is premature, for we cannot be sure that the peasants will necessarily go farther than the bourgeoisie. To express our confidence in the peasants, particularly now that they have turned to imperialism and defencism, i.e., to supporting the war, is, in my opinion, unsound. At the present moment the peasants have entered into a number of agreements with the Cadets. That is why I regard this clause in the Moscow resolution as politically incorrect. We want the peasants to go farther than the bourgeoisie, we want them to take the land from the landowners, but so far we can say nothing definite about their future conduct.

We studiously avoid the words "revolutionary democracy". We may use them when there is a question of an attack by the government, but at the present moment they are highly deceptive, for it is very difficult to distinguish the classes which have mingled in this chaos. Our task is to free those who are trailing behind. The Soviets are important to us not as a form; to us it is important what classes they represent. We must, therefore,

do a great deal of work to develop the class-consciousness of the proletariat. . . .

*(Resumes reading the resolution.)*

"(6) that this government, at the same time, is relying at present on the confidence of, and, to a certain extent, on an actual agreement with, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which now unites an obvious majority of workers and soldiers, i.e., peasants;

"(7) that every step of the Provisional Government, in both its domestic and foreign policies, is bound to open the eyes, not only of the proletarians in town and country and the semi-proletarians, but also of the broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie, to the real nature of this government,

*"the Conference resolves that:*

"(1) in order to ensure all the state power passing into the hands of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies or other bodies directly expressing the will of the people, prolonged work is necessary to develop proletarian class-consciousness and to unite the urban and rural proletarians against the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, for only work of this nature can guarantee real advance on the part of the whole revolutionary people;

"(2) this calls for many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for work aimed at increasing the number of these Soviets, consolidating their power, and welding together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups in the Soviets;

"(3) we must organise our Social-Democratic forces more effectively, so as to be able to direct the new wave of the revolutionary movement under the banner of revolutionary Social-Democracy."

This is the sum and substance of our policy. The whole petty bourgeoisie is now wavering and trying to conceal this wavering behind the empty phrase about revolutionary democracy. We must contrapose these waverings with a proletarian line. The counter-revolutionaries wish to frustrate it by premature action. Our task is to increase the number of Soviets, to reinforce them and to consolidate the unity of our Party.

The Moscow comrades have added to Point 3 the demand for control. This control is represented by Chkheidze, Steklov, Tsereteli, and other leaders of the petty-bourgeois bloc. Control without power is an empty phrase. How can I control Britain? To control her, you would have to seize her fleet. I can understand the uneducated mass of workers and soldiers naïvely and unconsciously believing in control. You only have to think about

the fundamental aspects of control, however, to realise that such a belief is a departure from the basic principles of the class struggle. What is control? If I write a paper, or a resolution, they will write a counter-resolution. To control, you must have power. If the broad mass of the petty-bourgeois bloc do not understand this, we must have the patience to explain it to them, but under no circumstances must we tell them a lie. If, however, I obscure this fundamental condition by speaking of control, then I am guilty of telling a lie and am playing into the hands of the capitalists and the imperialists. "You're welcome to your control, but we'll have the guns. Enjoy your control," they say. They know that at the moment the people cannot be denied their demand. Control without power is an empty petty-bourgeois phrase that hampers the progress of the Russian revolution. That is why I object to the Moscow comrades' third point.

As for this peculiar interlocking of two powers, in which the Provisional Government, lacking power, guns, soldiers, and the armed mass of people, leans on the Soviets that are relying so far on promises and are carrying out a policy of upholding those promises, if you want to play this game, you are doomed to failure. Our task is to keep out of this game. We shall carry on our work of explaining to the proletariat the unsoundness of this policy, and events, at every turn, will prove the correctness of our position. So far we are in the minority; the masses still do not believe us. We can wait; they will side with us when the government shows its face. The government's vacillations may repel them and they will swing over to our side; and then, taking into consideration the balance of forces, we shall say: Our time has come.

I now pass on the question of the war. This question actually united us when we came out against the loan, the attitude towards which showed immediately and clearly the alignment of political forces. As *Rech*<sup>61</sup> has stated, everybody, except *Yedinstvo*, is wavering; the entire petty bourgeoisie is for the loan—with reservations. The capitalists make a wry face and pocket the resolution with a smile, saying: "You may do the talking, but we shall do the acting." All those now voting for the loan are known as social-chauvinists the world over.

I shall now proceed to read the resolution on the war. It is in three parts: (1) a characterisation of the war from the point of view of its class significance; (2) the revolutionary defensism of the masses, something that cannot be found in any other country; (3) how to end the war.

Many of us, myself included, have had occasion to address the people, particularly the soldiers, and it seems to me that when everything is explained to them from the class point of

view, there is one thing in our stand on which they are most unclear, namely, in what way we intend to end the war, in what way we think it possible to stop it. The masses are in a maze of misunderstanding, there is complete ignorance about our stand; that is why we must express ourselves most clearly on this.

*(Reads the draft resolution on the war.)*

"The present war is, on the part of both groups of the belligerent powers, an imperialist war, i.e., one waged by the capitalists for world domination, for division of the capitalists' spoils, for profitable markets for finance and banking capital, and for the subjugation of the weaker nationalities.

"The transfer of state power in Russia from Nicholas II to the government of Guchkov, Lvov, and others, to the government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the class character and meaning of the war as far as Russia is concerned.

"The fact that the new government is carrying on the same imperialist war, i.e., an aggressive war of conquest, became glaringly apparent when the government not only failed to publish the secret treaties between ex-Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Britain, France, etc., but even formally confirmed these treaties. This was done without consulting the will of the people and with the express purpose of deceiving them, for it is well known that the secret treaties concluded by the ex-tsar are outrageously predatory treaties that give the Russian capitalists a free hand to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc.

"For this reason no proletarian party that does not wish to break completely with internationalism, i.e., with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle against the yoke of Capital, can support the present war, or the present government, or its loans, no matter in what glowing terms these loans may be described.

"Nor can any trust be placed in the present government's promise to renounce annexations, i.e., the conquest of foreign countries or the forcible retention of any nationality within the confines of Russia. For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound together by the thousand threads of Russian and Anglo-French banking capital, and intent on protecting the interests of capital, cannot renounce annexations in this war without at the same time ceasing to be capitalists, without renouncing the profits from the thousands of millions invested in loans, concessions, war industries, etc. And secondly, the new government, after renouncing annexations to mislead the people, declared through Milyukov (Moscow, April 9, 1917) that it had no intention of renouncing them. Finally, as revealed by *Dyelo Naroda*,<sup>62</sup> a newspaper in

which Minister Kerensky co-operates, Milyukov has not even sent his statement on the renunciation of annexations to other countries.

"Therefore, in warning the people against the capitalists' empty promises, the Conference declares that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between a renunciation of annexations in word and a renunciation of annexations in deed, i.e., the immediate publication of all the secret predatory treaties, of all acts of foreign policy, and the taking of immediate steps to fully liberate all peoples who are being oppressed, kept bound to Russia by force or kept in a state of subjection by the capitalist class, which is continuing the policy of ex-Czar Nicholas II, a policy that is a disgrace to our nation."

The second half of this part of the resolution deals with the promises made by the government. For a Marxist, perhaps, this part is superfluous; for the people, however, it is important. That is why we must add the reasons why we do not believe those promises, why we must not trust the government. The present government's promises to abandon its imperialist policy are not to be trusted. Our policy in this respect should not be in saying that we demand that the government publish the treaties. This would be a vain hope. To demand this of a capitalist government would be like demanding an exposure of commercial swindling. When we say that it is necessary to renounce annexations and indemnities, we should indicate how this can be done; and if we are asked who can do it, our answer will be that this step is by its very nature a revolutionary one, a step which only the revolutionary proletariat can make. Otherwise these promises will remain empty pledges and wishes used by the capitalists to keep the people in leading-strings.

*(Continues reading the draft resolution.)*

"The 'revolutionary defencism', which in Russia has now permeated almost all the Narodnik parties (the Popular Socialists, Trudoviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries), the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organising Committee, Chkhaidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the non-party revolutionaries, reflects, in point of class significance, the interests and point of view of the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, and the well-to-do peasants, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, it is a result of the deception of the masses by the capitalists, who instead of publishing the secret treaties confine themselves to promises and glib talk.

"It must be admitted that the great mass of 'revolutionary defencists' are honest, i.e., they are *really* opposed to annexations, to conquests, to oppressing weak peoples; they are *really*



working for a democratic, non-coercive peace among *all* the belligerents. This must be admitted for the reason that the class position of the urban and rural proletarians and semi-proletarians (i.e., of the people who earn their living, wholly or partly, by selling their labour-power to the capitalists) makes these classes uninterested in capitalist profits.

"Therefore, while recognising that any concessions to 'revolutionary defensism' are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism, the Conference declares that our Party will preach abstention from violence as long as the Russian capitalists and their Provisional Government confine themselves to threats of violence against the people (for example, Guchkov's unhappily notorious decree threatening the soldiers with punishment for arbitrary displacement of superiors), as long as the capitalists have *not* started using violence against the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', Agricultural Labourers', and other Deputies, which organise themselves freely, and freely elect and dismiss *all* public officers. Our Party will fight against the profound and fatal error of 'revolutionary defensism' solely by means of comradely persuasion, bringing home the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust of the broad masses in the government of the capitalists, who are the worst enemies of peace and socialism, is, in present-day Russia, the chief obstacle to a speedy termination of the war."

Some of the petty bourgeoisie have an interest in this policy of the capitalists—of that there can be no doubt. That is why it would be wrong for the proletarian party at present to place any hopes in the community of interests of the proletariat and the peasantry. We are fighting to win the peasants over to our side, but they are, to a certain extent, consciously on the side of the capitalists.

There is not the slightest doubt that, as a class, the proletariat and semi-proletariat are not interested in the war. They are influenced by tradition and deception. They still lack political experience. Therefore, our task is one of patient explanation. We make no concessions to them on matters of principle; yet we cannot look upon them as social-chauvinists. This section of the population has never been socialist, nor has it the slightest idea about socialism, it is only just awakening to political life. Nevertheless, its class-consciousness is growing and broadening with extraordinary rapidity. We must be able to bring our views home to it, and this is now the most difficult task of all, particularly for a party that only yesterday worked underground.

Some may ask: Have we not gone back on our own principles? We were advocating the conversion of the imperialist war into

a civil war, and now we are contradicting ourselves. But the first civil war in Russia has come to an end; we are now advancing towards the second war—the war between imperialism and the armed people. In this transitional period, as long as the armed force is in the hands of the soldiers, as long as Milyukov and Guchkov have not yet resorted to violence, this civil war, so far as we are concerned, turns into peaceful, prolonged, and patient class propaganda. To speak of civil war before people have come to realise the need for it is undoubtedly to lapse into Blanquism. We are for civil war, but only for civil war waged by a politically conscious class. He can be overthrown who is known to the people as an oppressor. There are no oppressors in Russia at present; it is the soldiers and not the capitalists who now have the guns and rifles; the capitalists are getting what they want now not by force but by deception, and to shout about violence now is senseless. One must be able to uphold the Marxist point of view, which says that this conversion of imperialist war into a civil war should be based on objective, and not subjective, conditions. For the time being we withdraw that slogan, but only for the time being. It is the soldiers and the workers who possess the arms now, not the capitalists. So long as the government has not started war, our propaganda remains peaceful.

The government would like to see us make the first imprudent move towards revolutionary action, as this would be to its advantage. It is exasperated because our Party has put forward the slogan of peaceful demonstrations. We must not cede one iota of our principles to the petty bourgeoisie, which is now marking time. The proletarian party would be making a dangerous mistake if it based its tactics on subjective desires where organisation is required. We cannot say that the majority is with us; what we need in the present situation is caution, caution, caution. To base proletarian tactics on subjective desires means to condemn it to failure.

The third point deals with the question of how to end the war. The Marxist point of view is well known, but the difficulty is how to bring it home to the masses in the clearest form possible. We are not pacifists, and we cannot repudiate a revolutionary war. In what way does a revolutionary war differ from a capitalist war? The difference is, above all, a class difference: which class is interested in the war? What policy does the interested class pursue in that war? . . . In addressing the people we must give concrete answers to their questions. And so the first question is how to distinguish a revolutionary war from a capitalist war. The ordinary man in the street does not grasp the distinction, he does not understand that it is a matter of class distinction. We must not confine ourselves to theory alone, we must

demonstrate in practice that we shall wage a really revolutionary war only when the proletariat is in power. I think that by presenting the question this way we are giving the clearest possible answer to the question as to what this war is about and who is waging it.

*Pravda* has published the draft of an appeal to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries.\* We have received information that fraternisation is taking place at the front, but this fraternisation is as yet politically semi-conscious. What it lacks is a clear political idea. The soldiers have come to feel instinctively that action must come from below. The class instinct of these revolutionary-minded people has suggested this path to them as being the only correct path. For a revolution, however, this is insufficient. We want to give a clear-cut political answer. In order to put an end to this war, state power must pass to the revolutionary class. I suggest that an appeal to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries be drawn up in the name of the Conference and published in all the appropriate languages. If, instead of all these hard-worked phrases about peace conferences, half of whose members are secret or open agents of the imperialist governments, we send out this appeal, we shall achieve our purpose a thousand times quicker than we would by all those peace conferences. We refuse to have any dealings with the German Plekhanovs. When we were passing through Germany, those gentlemen, the social-chauvinists, the German Plekhanovs, tried to get into our carriage, but we told them that we would not allow a single one of them in and that if any of them did get in they would not get out again without our having a big row. Had a man like Karl Liebknecht been permitted to come to see us, we would certainly have talked matters over with him. When we issue our appeal to the working people of all countries, giving an answer to the question of how to end the war, and when the soldiers read our answer showing a political way out of the war, then fraternisation will make tremendous strides. This must be done in order to raise fraternisation from the level of an instinctive revulsion against war to a clear political understanding of how to get out of it.

I now pass on to the third question, namely, the analysis of the current situation with reference to the position of the international working-class movement and that of international capitalism. From the point of view of Marxism, in discussing imperialism it is absurd to restrict oneself to conditions in one country alone, since all capitalist countries are closely bound together. Now, in time of war, this bond has grown immeasurably stronger. All humanity is thrown into a tangled bloody heap

from which no nation can extricate itself on its own. Though there are more and less advanced countries, this war has bound them all together by so many threads that escape from this tangle for any single country acting on its own is inconceivable.

We are all agreed that power must be wielded by the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. But what can and should they do if power passes to them, i.e., if power is in the hands of the proletarians and semi-proletarians? This is an involved and difficult situation. Speaking of the transfer of power, there is a danger—one that played a big part in previous revolutions, too—namely, the danger that the revolutionary class will not know what to do with state power when it has won it. The history of revolutions gives us examples of revolutions that failed for this very reason. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which cover the whole of Russia with their network, now stand at the centre of the revolution; it seems to me, however, that we have not sufficiently studied or understood them. Should they take over the power, it will no longer be a state in the ordinary sense of the word. The world has seen no such state power functioning for any considerable length of time, but the whole world's labour movement has been approaching it. This would be a state of the Paris Commune type. Such power is a dictatorship, i.e., it rests not on law, not on the formal will of the majority, but on direct, open force. Force is the instrument of power. How, then, will the Soviets apply this power? Will they return to the old way of governing by means of the police? Will they govern by means of the old organs of power? In my opinion they cannot do this. At any rate, they will be faced with the immediate task of creating a state that is not bourgeois. Among Bolsheviks, I have compared this state to the Paris Commune in the sense that the latter destroyed the old administrative organs and replaced them by absolutely new ones that were the direct organs of the workers. I am accused of having now used a word which the capitalists fear most of all, as they have begun to interpret it as a desire for the immediate introduction of socialism. I have used it, however, only in the sense of replacing the old organs by new, proletarian ones. Marx saw in this the greatest advance of the entire world proletarian movement.<sup>63</sup> The question of the social tasks of the proletariat is of the greatest practical significance to us, first, because we are now tied up with all the other countries, and are unable to disentangle ourselves—the proletariat will either break free as a whole or it will be crushed; secondly, the existence of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies is a fact. No one doubts that they cover the whole of Russia, that they are a state power and that there can be no other power. If that is so, we should form a clear idea as to what use

they can make of that power. Some people say that it is the same type of power as in France or America, but they have nothing of the kind there; such a direct power does not exist there.

The resolution on the current situation is in three parts. The first defines the objective situation created by the imperialist war, the position in which world capitalism finds itself; the second deals with the state of the international proletarian movement; the third deals with the tasks of the Russian working class when power passes into its hands. In the first part I formulate the conclusion that during the war capitalism has developed even more than before the war. It has already taken over entire fields of production. Twenty-seven years ago, in 1891, when the Germans adopted their Erfurt Programme,<sup>64</sup> Engels said that one could not continue to define capitalism as a system of production lacking planning. This is now out of date; once there are trusts there can no longer be lack of planning. Capitalism has made gigantic strides, particularly in the twentieth century, and the war has done more than was done for twenty-five years. State control of industry has made progress in Britain as well as in Germany. Monopoly, in general, has evolved into state-monopoly. The objective state of affairs has shown that the war has stepped up capitalist development, which has moved forward from capitalism to imperialism, from monopoly to state control. All this has brought the socialist revolution nearer and has created the objective conditions for it. Thus the socialist revolution has been brought closer as a result of the war.

Before the war Britain enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than any other country in the world, a point which politicians of the Cadet type have always stressed. There was freedom there because there was no revolutionary movement there. The war wrought an instant change. In a country where for decades no attempt was ever made to encroach upon the freedom of the socialist press, a typically tsarist censorship was immediately established, and all the prisons were filled with socialists. For centuries the capitalists there had learned to rule the people without the use of force, and if they have resorted to force, it means that they feel that the revolutionary movement is growing, that they cannot act otherwise. When we said that Liebknecht represented the masses, although he was one against a hundred German Plekhanovs, we were told that that was a utopian idea, an illusion. Yet, anyone who has, if only once, attended workers' meetings abroad knows that the sympathy of the masses for Liebknecht is an undeniable fact. His bitterest opponents had to manoeuvre when facing the public, and if they did not pretend to be his supporters, neither did they dare to come out against him. Now things have gone still farther. We now have mass

strikes, we have fraternisation at the front. To attempt prophecy in this respect would be a great mistake, but we cannot get away from the fact that sympathy for the International is growing, that revolutionary unrest is beginning in the German army. This is a fact which shows that the revolution in Germany is mounting.

What, then, are the tasks of the revolutionary proletariat? The main flaw, the main error, in all the socialists' arguments is that this question is put in too general a form, as the question of the transition to socialism. What we should talk about, however, are concrete steps and measures. Some of them are ripe, and some are not. We are now at a transition stage. Clearly, we have brought to the fore new forms, unlike those in bourgeois states. The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are a form of state which does not exist and never did exist in any country. This form represents the first steps towards socialism and is inevitable at the beginning of a socialist society. This is a fact of decisive importance. The Russian revolution has created the Soviets. No bourgeois country in the world has or can have such state institutions. No socialist revolution can be operative with any other state power than this. The Soviets must take power not for the purpose of building an ordinary bourgeois republic, nor for the purpose of making a direct transition to socialism. This cannot be. What, then, is the purpose? The Soviets must take power in order to make the first concrete steps towards this transition, steps that can and should be made. In this respect fear is the worst enemy. The masses must be urged to take these steps immediately, otherwise the power of the Soviets will have no meaning and will give the people nothing.

I shall now attempt to answer the question as to what concrete measures we can suggest to the people without running counter to our Marxist convictions.

Why do we want the power to pass to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The first measure the Soviets must carry out is the nationalisation of the land. All the peoples are talking about nationalisation. Some say it is a most utopian measure; nevertheless, everybody comes to accept it, because landownership in Russia is so complicated that the only way out is to remove all boundary lines dividing the land and make it the property of the state. Private ownership of land must be abolished. That is the task confronting us, because the majority of the people are in favour of it. To accomplish it we need the Soviets. This measure cannot be carried out with the help of the old government officials.

The second measure. We cannot be for "introducing" socialism—this would be the height of absurdity. We must preach socialism. The majority of the population in Russia are peasants,

small farmers who can have no idea of socialism. But what objections can they have to a bank being set up in each village to enable them to improve their farming? They can say nothing against it. We must put over these practical measures to the peasants in our propaganda, and make the peasants realise that they are necessary.

Quite another thing is the Sugar Syndicate. This is a clear fact. Here our proposal must be direct and practical: these already fully developed syndicates must be taken over by the state. If the Soviets intend to assume power, it is only for such ends. There is no other reason why they should do so. The alternative is: either the Soviets develop further, or they die an ignominious death as in the case of the Paris Commune. If it is a bourgeois republic that is needed, this can very well be left to the Cadets.

I shall conclude by referring to a speech which impressed me most. I heard a coal miner deliver a remarkable speech. Without using a single bookish word, he told us how they had made the revolution. Those miners were not concerned with the question as to whether or not they should have a president. They seized the mine, and the important question to them was how to keep the cables intact so that production might not be interrupted. Then came the question of bread, which was scarce, and the miners also agreed on the method of obtaining it. Now that is a real programme of the revolution, not derived from books. That is what I call really winning power locally.

Nowhere is the bourgeoisie so well established as in Petrograd. Here the capitalists have the power in their hands. But throughout the country the peasants, without pursuing any socialist task, are carrying out purely practical measures. I think that only this programme of the revolutionary movement indicates the true path of the revolution. We are for these measures being started on with the greatest caution and circumspection. But it is only these measures that must be carried out; we should go ahead in this direction only. There is no other way out. Unless this is done the Soviets will be broken up and will die an ignominious death. But if the revolutionary proletariat should actually win power, it will only be for the sake of going forward. And to go forward means to take definite steps to get us out of the war—words alone won't do it. The complete success of these steps is only possible by world revolution, if the revolution kills the war, if the workers of the whole world support the revolution. Taking power is, therefore, the only practical measure and the only way out.

3  
**SPEECH WINDING UP THE DEBATE  
 ON THE REPORT ON THE CURRENT  
 SITUATION  
 APRIL 24 (MAY 7)**

Comrade Kamenev was quick to seize on the talk of adventurism. I shall have to dwell on this. Comrade Kamenev is convinced and asserts that in opposing the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government", we showed vacillation. I agree with him; there certainly has been vacillation away from revolutionary policy, and this vacillation must be avoided. I think that our differences with Comrade Kamenev are not very great, because by agreeing with us he has changed his position. In what did our adventurism consist? It was the attempt to resort to forcible measures. We did not know to what extent the masses had swung to our side during that anxious moment. If it had been a strong swing things would have been different. We advanced the slogan for peaceful demonstrations, but several comrades from the Petrograd Committee issued a different slogan. We cancelled it, but were too late to prevent the masses from following the slogan of the Petrograd Committee. We say that the slogan "Down with the Provisional Government" is an adventurist slogan, that the government cannot be overthrown now. That is why we have advanced the slogan for peaceful demonstrations. All we wanted was a peaceful reconnoitring of the enemy's forces; we did not want to give battle. But the Petrograd Committee turned a trifle more to the left, which in this case is certainly a very grave crime.<sup>65</sup> Our organisational apparatus proved weak—our decisions are not being carried out by everyone. Together with the correct slogan "Long Live the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!" stood the incorrect slogan "Down with the Provisional Government". At the time of action, to go a "trifle more to the left" was wrong. We regard this as a very serious crime, as disorganisation. Had we deliberately allowed such an act, we would not have remained in the Central Committee for one moment. It happened because of the weakness of our organisational apparatus. Yes, there were shortcomings in our organisation. We have raised the question of improving our organisation.

The Mensheviks and Co. are working the word "adventurism" as hard as they can. But it is they, of all people, who had neither an organisation nor a policy. We have both an organisation and a policy.

At that moment the bourgeoisie mobilised all its forces; the centre hid itself, and we organised a peaceful demonstration.



We were the only ones who had a political line. Did we make mistakes? We did. Only he who does nothing never errs. Perfect organisation is a difficult thing.

Now about control.

We are at one with Comrade Kamenev, except on the question of control. He views control as a political act. Subjectively, however, he understands this word better than Chkheidze and others. We will not accept control. People tell us that we have isolated ourselves, that, by uttering a lot of terrible words about communism, we have frightened the bourgeoisie into fits. . . . Maybe! But it was not this that isolated us. It was the question of the loan that caused our isolation. It was on this question that we found ourselves in the minority. Yes, we are in the minority. Well, what of it? To be a socialist while chauvinism is the craze means to be in the minority. To be in the majority means to be a chauvinist. At the moment the peasant, together with Milyukov, is hitting socialism by means of the loan. The peasant follows Milyukov and Guchkov. This is a fact. The bourgeois-democratic dictatorship of the peasantry is an old formula.

If we want to draw the peasantry into the revolution we must keep the proletariat apart from it in a separate proletarian party, because the peasantry is chauvinistic. To attract the peasant now means to surrender to the mercies of Milyukov.

The Provisional Government must be overthrown, but not now, and not in the usual way. We agree with Comrade Kamenev. But we must explain. It is this word that Comrade Kamenev has been harping on. Nevertheless, this is the only thing we can do.

Comrade Rykov says that socialism must come from other countries with a more developed industry. But that is not so. Nobody can say who will begin it and who will end it. That is not Marxism; it is a parody of Marxism.

Marx said that France would begin it and Germany would finish it. But the Russian proletariat has achieved more than anybody else.

If we had said, "No tsar, but a dictatorship of the proletariat", well, this would have meant skipping over the petty bourgeoisie. But what we are saying is—help the revolution through the Soviets. We must not lapse into reformism. We are fighting to win, not to lose. At the worst we count on partial success. Even if we suffer defeat we shall achieve partial success. We shall get reforms. Reforms are an auxiliary instrument of the class struggle.

Further, Comrade Rykov says that there is no period of transition from capitalism to socialism. That is not so. It is a break with Marxism.

The line we have marked out is correct, and in future we shall

make every effort to achieve an organisation in which there will be no Petrograd Committee-men to disobey the Central Committee. We are growing, and that is as it should be with a real party.

First published in 1921  
in N Lenin (V Ulyanov), *Works*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 244-46

## 4 SPEECH IN FAVOUR OF THE RESOLUTION ON THE WAR APRIL 27 (MAY 10)

### MINUTES

Comrades, the original draft resolution on the war was read by me at the City Conference. Because of the crisis that absorbed the attention and energy of all our comrades in Petrograd, we were unable to amend the draft. Since yesterday, however, the committee working on it has made satisfactory progress: the draft has been changed, considerably shortened and, in our opinion, improved.

I wish to say a few words about the construction of this resolution. It consists of three parts. The first is devoted to a class analysis of the war; it also contains our statement of principles explaining why our Party warns against placing any trust in promises made by the Provisional Government, as well as against any support for that government. The second part of the resolution deals with the question of revolutionary defencism as an extremely broad mass movement which has now united against us the overwhelming majority of the nation. Our task is to define the class significance of this revolutionary defencism, its essence, and the real balance of forces, and find a way to fight this trend. The third part of the resolution deals with the question of how to end the war. This practical question, which is of supreme importance to our Party, required a detailed answer. We think that we have succeeded in meeting this requirement satisfactorily. The articles in *Pravda* and numerous articles on the war published in provincial newspapers (the latter reach us very irregularly, because the postal service is disorganised, and we have to take every convenient opportunity of getting them for the Central Committee) reveal a negative attitude towards the war and the loan. I think that the vote against the loan settled the question as to our opposition to revolutionary defencism. I do not think it is possible to go into greater detail on this.

"The present war is, on the part of both groups of the belligerent powers, an imperialist war, i.e., one waged by the capitalists for the division of the profits obtained from world domination, for markets for finance (banking) capital, for the subjugation of the weaker nationalities, etc."

The primary and basic issue is the meaning of the war, a question of a general and political character, a moot question which the capitalists and the social-chauvinists carefully evade. This is why we must put this question first, with this addition to it:

"Each day of war enriches the financial and industrial bourgeoisie and impoverishes and saps the strength of the proletariat and the peasantry of all the belligerents, as well as of the neutral countries. In Russia, moreover, prolongation of the war involves a grave danger to the revolution's gains and its further development."

"The passing of state power in Russia to the Provisional Government, a government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the character and meaning of the war as far as Russia is concerned."

The words I have just read to you are of great importance in all our propaganda and agitation. Has the class character of the war changed now? Can it change? Our reply is based on the fact that power has passed to the landowners and capitalists, the same government that had engineered this war. We then pass on to one of the facts that reveal most clearly the character of the war. Class character as expressed by the entire policy carried on for decades by definite classes is one thing, the obvious class character of the war is another.

"This fact was most strikingly demonstrated when the new government not only failed to publish the secret treaties between Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Britain, France, etc., but even formally and without consulting the nation confirmed these secret treaties, which promise the Russian capitalists a free hand to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc. By concealing these treaties from the people of Russia the latter are being deceived as to the true character of the war."

And so, I emphasise again, we are pointing out one particularly striking confirmation of the character of the war. Even if there were no treaties at all, the character of the war would be the same because groups of capitalists can very often come to an agreement without any treaties. But the treaties exist and their implications are apparent. For the purpose of co-ordinating the work of our agitators and propagandists, we think this fact should be especially emphasised, and so we have made a special point of it. The people's attention is and should be called to this fact, all the more so as the treaties were concluded by the tsar, who

has been overthrown. The people ought to be made aware that the present governments are carrying on the war on the basis of treaties concluded between the old governments. This, I feel, makes the contradictions between the capitalist interests and the will of the people stand out most strikingly, and it is for the propagandists to expose these contradictions, to draw the people's attention to them, to strive to explain them to the masses by appealing to their class-consciousness. The contents of these treaties leave no room for doubt that they promise enormous profits to the capitalists to be derived from robbing other countries. That is why they are always kept secret. There is not a republic in the world whose foreign policy is conducted in the open. It is fatuous, while the capitalist system exists, to expect the capitalists to open up their ledgers. While there is private ownership of the means of production, there is bound to be private ownership of shares and financial operations. The corner-stone of contemporary diplomacy is financial operations, which amount to robbing and strangling the weak nationalities. These, we believe, are the fundamental premises upon which the evaluation of the war rests. Proceeding from these premises we conclude that: "For this reason, no proletarian party that does not wish to break completely with internationalism, i.e., with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle against the yoke of capital, can support the present war, or the present government, or its loans."

This is our chief and basic conclusion. It determines our whole tactics and sets us apart from all the other parties, no matter how socialistic they claim to be. This proposition, which is irrefutable to all of us, predetermines our attitude towards all the other political parties.

The next point concerns the wide use which our government is making of promises. These promises are the object of a prolonged campaign by the Soviets, which have become muddled by these promises, and which are trying the people's patience. We, therefore, consider it necessary to add to our purely objective analysis of the class relations an analysis of those promises, promises which in themselves have, of course, no significance to a Marxist, but which mean a great deal to the people, and mean even more in politics. The Petrograd Soviet has become muddled by these promises, has given weight to them by promising its support. This is the reason why we add the following statement to this point:

"No trust can be placed in the present government's promises to renounce annexations, i.e., conquests of foreign countries or retention by force of any nationality within the confines of Russia."

"Annexation" being a foreign word, we give it an exact political definition, such as neither the Cadets nor the petty-bourgeois democratic parties (the Narodniks and Mensheviks) can give. Few words have been used so meaninglessly and slovenly.

"For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound together by the thousand threads of banking capital, cannot renounce annexations in this war without renouncing the profits from the thousands of millions invested in loans, concessions, war industries, etc. And secondly, the new government, after renouncing annexations to mislead the people, declared through Milyukov (Moscow, April 9, 1917) that it had no intention of renouncing them, and, in the Note of April 18 and its elucidation of April 22, confirmed the expansionist character of its policy.

"Therefore, in warning the people against the capitalists' empty promises, the Conference declares that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between a renunciation of annexations in word and a renunciation of annexations in deed, i.e., the immediate publication and abrogation of all the secret, predatory treaties and the immediate granting to all nationalities of the right to determine by free voting whether they wish to be independent states or to be part of another state."

We have found it necessary to mention this, because the question of peace without annexations is the basic issue in all these discussions of peace terms. All parties recognise that peace will become the alternative, and that peace with annexations will be an unheard-of catastrophe for all countries. In a country where there is political liberty, the question of peace cannot be placed before the people otherwise than in terms of peace without annexations. It is therefore necessary to declare for peace without annexations, and so the only thing to do is to lie by wrapping up the meaning of annexations or evading the question altogether. *Rech*, for instance, cries that the return of Courland means renunciation of annexations. When I was addressing the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, a soldier handed me a slip of paper with the following question: "We have to fight to win back Courland. Does winning back Courland mean that you stand for annexations?" I had to reply in the affirmative. We are against Germany annexing Courland, but we are also against Russia holding Courland by force. For example, our government has issued a manifesto proclaiming the independence of Poland. This manifesto, chock-full of meaningless phrases, states that Poland must form a free military alliance with Russia. These three words contain the whole truth. A free military alliance of little Poland with huge Russia is, in point of fact, complete military subjection of Poland. Poland may be granted political freedom but her boundaries will be determined by the military alliance.

If we fight for the Russian capitalists keeping possession of the former annexed territories of Courland and Poland, then the German capitalists have the right to rob Courland. They may argue this way: we looted Poland together. At the end of the eighteenth century, when we began to tear Poland to pieces, Prussia was a very small and weak country while Russia was a giant, and therefore she grabbed more. Now we have grown and it is our intention, if you please, to snatch a larger share. You can say nothing against this capitalist logic. In 1863 Japan was a mere nothing in comparison with Russia, but in 1905 Japan thrashed Russia.<sup>66</sup> From 1863 to 1873 Germany was a mere nothing in comparison with Britain, but now Germany is stronger than Britain. The Germans may argue: we were weak when Courland was taken from us, but we have now grown stronger than you, and we wish to take it back. Not to renounce annexations means to justify endless wars over the conquest of weaker nationalities. To renounce annexations means to let each nation determine freely whether it wants to live separately or together with others. Of course, for this purpose, armies must be withdrawn. To show the slightest hesitation on the question of annexations means to justify endless wars. It follows that we could allow no hesitation on this question. With regard to annexations, our answer is that nations must be free to make their own decisions. How can we secure economic freedom alongside this political freedom? To accomplish this, power must pass into the hands of the proletariat and the yoke of capital must be overthrown.

I now pass on to the second part of the resolution.

"The 'revolutionary defencism', which in Russia has now permeated all the Narodnik parties (the Popular Socialists, Trudoviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries), the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organising Committee, Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the non-party revolutionaries, reflects, in point of class significance, the interests and point of view of the well-to-do peasants and a part of the small proprietors, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, revolutionary defencism is a result of the deception by the capitalists of a part of the urban and rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, who, by their class position, have no interest in the profits of the capitalists and in the imperialist war."

Consequently, our task here is to determine from what sections of society this defencist tendency could emerge. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois country in the world, and the upper sections of the petty bourgeoisie are directly interested in continuing the war. The well-to-do peasants, like the capitalists, are profiting by the war. On the other hand, the mass of proletarians

and semi-proletarians have no interest in annexations because they make no profit on banking capital. How, then, have these classes come to adopt the position of revolutionary defencism? Their attitude towards revolutionary defencism is due to the influence of capitalist ideology, which the resolution designates by the word "deception". They are unable to differentiate between the interests of the capitalists and the interests of the country. Hence we conclude:

"The Conference recognises that any concessions to revolutionary defencism are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism. As for the defencist tendencies among the broad masses, our Party will fight against these tendencies by ceaselessly explaining the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust in the government of the capitalists, at the moment, is one of the chief obstacles to a speedy termination of the war."

The last words express the specific feature that sharply distinguishes Russia from the other Western capitalist countries and from all capitalist democratic republics. For it cannot be said of those countries that the trustfulness of the unenlightened masses there is the chief cause of the prolongation of the war. The masses there are now in the iron grip of military discipline. The more democratic the republic, the stronger discipline is, since law in a republic rests on "the will of the people". Owing to the revolution there is no such discipline in Russia. The masses freely elect representatives to the Soviets, which is something that does not exist now anywhere else in the world. But the masses have unreasoning trust, and are therefore used for the purposes of the struggle. So far we can do nothing but explain. Our explanations must deal with the immediate revolutionary tasks and methods of action. When the masses are free, any attempts to act in the name of a minority, without explaining things to the masses, would be senseless Blanquism, mere adventurism. Only by winning over the masses, if they can be won, can we lay a solid foundation for the victory of the proletarian class struggle.

I now pass on to the third part of the resolution:

"In regard to the most important question of all, namely, how to end the present capitalist war as soon as possible, not by a coercive peace, but by a truly democratic peace, the Conference recognises and declares the following:

"This war cannot be ended by a refusal of the soldiers of one side only to continue the war, by a simple cessation of hostilities by one of the belligerents."

The idea of terminating the war in this way has been attributed to us over and over again by persons who wish to win an easy victory over their opponents by distorting the latter's views—a

typical method used by the capitalists, who ascribe to us the absurd idea of wishing to end the war by a one-sided refusal to fight. They say "the war cannot be ended by sticking your bayonet in the ground", to quote a soldier, a typical revolutionary defencist. This is no argument, I say. The idea that the war can be terminated without changing the classes in power is an anarchist idea. Either this idea is anarchistic, in which case it has no meaning, no state significance, or it is a hazy pacifist idea that fails completely to appreciate the connection between politics and the oppressing class. War is an evil, peace is a blessing. . . . Certainly this idea must be made clear to the people, must be popularised. Incidentally, all our resolutions are being written for leading Party members, for Marxists, and do not make reading matter for the masses. But they must serve as unifying and guiding political principles for every propagandist and agitator. To meet this requirement, one more paragraph was added to the resolution:

"The Conference reiterates its protest against the base slander spread by the capitalists against our Party to the effect that we are in favour of a separate peace with Germany. We consider the German capitalists to be as predatory as the Russian, British, French, and other capitalists, and Emperor Wilhelm as bad a crowned brigand as Nicholas II or the British, Italian, Rumanian, and all other monarchs."

On this point there was some disagreement in the committee, some maintaining that in this passage our language became too popular, others, that the British, Italian, and Rumanian monarchs did not deserve the honour of being mentioned. After a detailed discussion, however, we all agreed that, since our present aim is to refute all the slanders which *Birzhevka*<sup>67</sup> has tried to spread against us rather crudely, *Rech* more subtly, *Yedinstvo* by direct implication, we must, on a question of this nature, come out with a most sharp and trenchant criticism of these ideas, having in mind the broadest masses of the people. Asked why we do not help to overthrow Wilhelm if we consider him a brigand, we can say that the others, too, are brigands, that we ought to fight against them as well, that one must not forget the kings of Italy and Rumania, that brigands can also be found among our Allies. These two paragraphs are intended to combat the slander, which is meant to lead to riot-mongering and squabbling. This is the reason why we must now pass on to the serious practical question of how to terminate the war.

"Our Party will patiently but persistently explain to the people the truth that wars are waged by *governments*, that wars are always indissolubly bound up with the policies of definite *classes*, that this war can be terminated by a democratic peace *only* if the entire state power, in at least several of the belligerent coun-



tries, has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians which is really capable of putting an end to the oppressive rule of capital."

To a Marxist these truths—that wars are waged by the capitalists and are bound up with the capitalists' class interests—are absolute truths. A Marxist need not dwell on that. But as far as the masses are concerned, skilful agitators and propagandists should be able to explain this truth simply, without using foreign words, for with us discussions usually degenerate into empty and futile squabbling. The explaining of this truth is what we have been trying to do in every part of the resolution. We say that in order to understand what the war is about, you must ask who gains by it; in order to understand how to put an end to the war, you must ask which classes do not gain by it. The connection here is clear, hence we conclude:

"In Russia, the revolutionary class, having taken state power, would adopt a series of measures that would lead to the destruction of the economic rule of the capitalists, as well as measures that would render them completely harmless politically, and would immediately and frankly offer to all nations a democratic peace on the basis of a complete renunciation of every possible form of annexation."

Once we speak in the name of the revolutionary class, the people have the right to ask: and what about you, what would you do in their place to end the war? This is an inevitable question. The people are electing us now as their representatives, and we must give a very precise answer. The revolutionary class, having taken power, would set out to undermine the rule of the capitalists, and would then offer to all nations well-defined peace terms, because, unless the economic rule of the capitalists is undermined, all we can have are scraps of paper. Only a victorious class can accomplish this, can bring about a change in policy.

I repeat: to bring this truth home to the uneducated mass, we need intermediate links that would help to introduce this question to them. The mistake and falsehood of popular literature on the war is the evasion of this question; it ignores this question and presents the matter as if there had been no class struggle, as if two countries had lived amicably until one attacked the other, and the attacked has been defending itself. This is vulgar reasoning in which there is not a shadow of objective truth, and which is a deliberate deception of the people by educated persons. If we approach this question properly, anyone would be able to grasp the essential point; for the interests of the ruling classes are one thing, and the interests of the oppressed classes are another.

What would happen if the revolutionary class took power?

"Such measures and such a frank offer of peace would bring about complete confidence of the workers of the belligerent countries in each other. . . ."

Such confidence is impossible now, and the words of manifestos will not create it. Where the philosopher once said that speech has been given to man to enable him to conceal his thoughts, the diplomats always say: "Conferences are held to deceive the people." Not only the capitalists, but the socialists too reason this way. This particularly applies to the conference which Borgbjerg is calling.

"... and would inevitably lead to uprisings of the proletariat against those imperialist governments as might resist the offered peace."

Nobody now believes the capitalist government when it says: "We are for peace without annexations." The masses have the instinct of oppressed classes which tells them that nothing has changed. Only if the policy were actually changed in one country, confidence would appear and attempts at uprisings would be made. We speak of "uprisings" because we are now discussing all countries. To say "a revolution has taken place in one country, so now it must take place in Germany"—is false reasoning. There is a tendency to form an order of sequence, but this cannot be done. We all went through the revolution of 1905. We all heard or witnessed how that revolution gave birth to revolutionary ideas throughout the world, a fact which Marx constantly referred to. Revolutions cannot be made, they cannot be taken in turns. A revolution cannot be made to order—it develops. This form of charlatanism is now frequently being practised in Russia. The people are told: You in Russia have made a revolution, now it is the Germans' turn. If the objective conditions change, then an uprising is inevitable, but we do not know whose turn it will be, when it will take place, and with what degree of success. We are asked: If the revolutionary class takes power in Russia, and if no uprisings break out in other countries, what will the revolutionary party do? What will happen then? This question is answered in the last paragraph of our resolution.

"Until the revolutionary class in Russia takes the entire state power, our Party will do all it can to support those proletarian parties and groups abroad that are in fact, already during the war, conducting a revolutionary struggle against their imperialist governments and their bourgeoisie."

This is all that we can promise and must do now. The revolution is mounting in every country, but no one knows to what extent it is mounting and when it will break out. In every country there are people who are carrying on a revolutionary struggle against their governments. They are the people, the only people,

we must support. This is the real thing—all else is falsehood. And so we add:

“Our Party will particularly support the mass fraternisation of the soldiers of all the belligerent countries that has already begun at the front. . . .”

This is to meet Plekhanov’s argument: “What will come of it? Suppose you do fraternise, then what? Does this not suggest the possibility of a separate peace at the front?” This is jiggery-pokery, not a serious argument. We want fraternisation on all fronts, and we are taking pains to encourage it. When we worked in Switzerland, we published an appeal in two languages, with French on one side and German on the other, urging those soldiers to do the same thing we are now urging the Russian soldiers to do. We do not confine ourselves to fraternisation between German and Russian soldiers, we call upon all to fraternise. This, then, is what we mean by fraternisation:

“...endeavouring to turn this instinctive expression of solidarity of the oppressed into politically-conscious movement as well organised as possible for the transfer of all state power in all the belligerent countries to the revolutionary proletariat.”

Fraternisation, so far, is instinctive, and we must not deceive ourselves on this score. We must admit this in order not to delude the people. The fraternising soldiers are actuated not by a clear-cut political idea but by the instinct of oppressed people, who are tired, exhausted and begin to lose confidence in capitalist promises. They say: “While you keep on talking about peace—we have been hearing it now for two and a half years—we shall start things moving ourselves.” This is a true class instinct. Without this instinct the cause of the revolution would be hopeless. As you know, nobody would free the workers if they did not free themselves. But is instinct alone sufficient? You would not get far if you rely on instinct alone. This instinct must be transformed into political awareness.

In our “Appeal to the Soldiers of All the Belligerent Countries” we explain into what this fraternisation should develop—into the passing of political power to the Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies.\* Naturally, the German workers will call their Soviets by a different name, but this does not matter. The point is that we undoubtedly recognise as correct that fraternisation is instinctive, that we do not simply confine ourselves to encouraging fraternisation, but set ourselves the task of turning this instinctive fraternisation of workers and peasants in soldiers’ uniforms into a politically-conscious movement, whose aim is the transfer of power in all the belligerent countries into the hands of

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 188.—Ed.

the revolutionary proletariat. This is a very difficult task, but the position in which humanity finds itself under capitalist rule is tremendously difficult, too, and leads to destruction. This is why it will call forth that explosion of discontent which is the guarantee of proletarian revolution.

This is our resolution, which we submit for consideration to the Conference.

First published in 1921  
in N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov), *Works*,  
Vol XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol 24  
pp 257-69

## 5 RESOLUTION ON THE WAR

The present war is, on the part of both groups of the belligerent powers, an imperialist war, i.e., one waged by the capitalists for the division of the profits obtained from world domination, for markets for finance (banking) capital, for the subjugation of the weaker nationalities, etc. Each day of war enriches the financial and industrial bourgeoisie and impoverishes and saps the strength of the proletariat and the peasantry of all the belligerents, as well as of the neutral countries. In Russia, moreover, prolongation of the war involves a grave danger to the revolution's gains and its further development.

The passing of state power in Russia to the Provisional Government, a government of the landowners and capitalists, did not and could not alter the character and meaning of the war as far as Russia is concerned.

This fact was most strikingly demonstrated when the new government not only failed to publish the secret treaties between Tsar Nicholas II and the capitalist governments of Britain, France, etc., but even formally and without consulting the nation confirmed these secret treaties, which promise the Russian capitalists a free hand to rob China, Persia, Turkey, Austria, etc. By concealing these treaties from the people of Russia the latter are being deceived as to the true character of the war.

For this reason, no proletarian party that does not wish to break completely with internationalism, i.e., with the fraternal solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle against the yoke of capital, can support the present war, or the present government, or its loans.

No trust can be placed in the present government's promises to renounce annexations, i.e., conquests of foreign countries or re-

tention by force of any nationality within the confines of Russia. For, in the first place, the capitalists, bound together by the thousand threads of banking capital, cannot renounce annexations in this war without renouncing the profits from the thousands of millions invested in loans, concessions, war industries, etc. And secondly, the new government, after renouncing annexations to mislead the people, declared through Milyukov (Moscow, April 9, 1917) that it had no intention of renouncing them, and, in the Note of April 18 and its elucidation of April 22, confirmed the expansionist character of its policy. Therefore, in warning the people against the capitalists' empty promises, the Conference declares that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between a renunciation of annexations in word and a renunciation of annexations in deed, i.e., the immediate publication and abrogation of all the secret, predatory treaties and the immediate granting to all nationalities of the right to determine by free voting whether they wish to be independent states or to be part of another state.

## II

The "revolutionary defencism", which in Russia has now permeated all the Narodnik parties (the Popular Socialists, Trudoviks, and Socialist-Revolutionaries), the opportunist party of the Menshevik Social-Democrats (the Organising Committee, Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.), and the majority of the non-party revolutionaries, reflects, in point of class significance, the interests and point of view of the well-to-do peasants and a part of the small proprietors, who, like the capitalists, profit by oppressing weak peoples. On the other hand, "revolutionary defencism" is a result of the deception by the capitalists of a part of the urban and rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, who, by their class position, have no interest in the profits of the capitalists and in the imperialist war.

The Conference recognises that any concessions to "revolutionary defencism" are absolutely impermissible and virtually signify a complete break with internationalism and socialism. As for the defencist tendencies among the broad masses, our Party will fight against these tendencies by ceaselessly explaining the truth that the attitude of unreasoning trust in the government of the capitalists, at the moment, is one of the chief obstacles to a speedy termination of the war.

## III

In regard to the most important question of all, namely, how to end the present capitalist war as soon as possible, not by a

coercive peace, but by a truly democratic peace, the Conference recognises and declares the following:

This war cannot be ended by a refusal of the soldiers of one side only to continue the war, by a simple cessation of hostilities by one of the belligerents.

The Conference reiterates its protest against the base slander spread by the capitalists against our Party to the effect that we are in favour of a separate peace with Germany. We consider the German capitalists to be as predatory as the Russian, British, French, and other capitalists, and Emperor Wilhelm as bad a crowned brigand as Nicholas II or the British, Italian, Rumanian, and all other monarchs.

Our Party will patiently but persistently explain to the people the truth that wars are waged by *governments*, that wars are always indissolubly bound up with the policies of definite *classes*, that this war can be terminated by a democratic peace *only* if the entire state power, in at least several of the belligerent countries, has passed to the class of the proletarians and semi-proletarians which is really capable of putting an end to the oppressive rule of capital.

In Russia, the revolutionary class, having taken state power, would adopt a series of measures that would undermine the economic rule of the capitalists, as well as measures that would render them completely harmless politically, and would immediately and frankly offer to all nations a democratic peace on the basis of a complete renunciation of every possible form of annexation and indemnity. Such measures and such a frank offer of peace would bring about complete confidence of the workers of the belligerent countries in each other and would inevitably lead to uprisings of the proletariat against those imperialist governments as might resist the offered peace.

Until the revolutionary class in Russia takes the entire state power, our Party will do all it can to support those proletarian parties and groups abroad that are in fact, already during the war, conducting a revolutionary struggle against their imperialist governments and their bourgeoisie. Our Party will particularly support the mass fraternisation of the soldiers of all the belligerent countries that has already begun at the front, endeavouring to turn this instinctive expression of solidarity of the oppressed into a politically-conscious movement as well organised as possible for the transfer of all state power in all the belligerent countries to the revolutionary proletariat.

## 6

**RESOLUTION ON THE ATTITUDE  
TOWARDS THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT**

The All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. recognises that:

1. The Provisional Government, by its class character, is the organ of landowner and bourgeois domination;

2. The Provisional Government and the classes it represents are bound with indissoluble economic and political ties to Russian and Anglo-French imperialism;

3. The Provisional Government is carrying out its proclaimed programme only partially, and only under pressure of the revolutionary proletariat and, to some extent, of the petty bourgeoisie;

4. The forces of bourgeois and landowner counter-revolution, now being organised, have already, under cover of the Provisional Government and with the latter's obvious connivance, launched an attack on revolutionary democracy: thus the Provisional Government is avoiding fixing the date for the elections to the Constituent Assembly, preventing the arming of the people as a whole, opposing the transfer of all the land to the people, foisting upon it the landowners' way of settling the agrarian question, obstructing the introduction of an eight-hour workday, condoning counter-revolutionary propaganda in the army (by Guchkov and Co.), rallying the high-ranking officers against the soldiers, etc.;

5. The Provisional Government, protecting the profits of the capitalists and landowners, is incapable of taking a number of revolutionary economic measures (food supply, etc.) which are absolutely and urgently necessary in view of the impending economic catastrophe;

6. This government, at the same time, is relying at present on the confidence of, and on an actual agreement with, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which is still the leading organisation for the majority of workers and soldiers, i.e., peasants;

7. Every step of the Provisional Government, in both its domestic and foreign policies, is bound to open the eyes of the urban and rural proletarians and semi-proletarians and force various sections of the petty bourgeoisie to choose between one and the other political line.

Considering the above, the Conference resolves that:

1. Extensive work has to be done to develop proletarian class-consciousness and to unite the urban and rural proletarians against the vacillations of the petty bourgeoisie, for only work of this nature can serve as a sure guarantee of the successful transfer of the entire state power into the hands of the Soviets of Workers'

and Soldiers' Deputies or other organs directly expressing the will of the majority of the people (organs of local self-government, the Constituent Assembly, etc.);

2. This calls for many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for work aimed at increasing the number of these Soviets, consolidating their power, and welding together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups in the Soviets;

3. In order immediately to consolidate and widen the gains of the revolution in the local areas, it is necessary, with the backing of a solid majority of the local population, in every way to develop, organise, and strengthen its independent actions aimed at implementing liberties, dismissing the counter-revolutionary authorities, introducing economic measures, such as control over production and distribution, etc.;

4. The political crisis of April 19-21 precipitated by the Note of the Provisional Government has shown that the government party of the Constitutional-Democrats, which is organising counter-revolutionary elements both in the army and in the streets, is now making attempts to shoot down the workers. In view of the unstable situation arising from the dual power, the repetition of such attempts is inevitable, and it is the duty of the party of the proletariat to tell the people as forcibly as possible that, in order to avert the seriously threatening danger of such mass shootings of the proletariat as took place in Paris in the June days of 1848, it is necessary to organise and arm the proletariat, to establish the closest alliance between the proletariat and the revolutionary army, to break with the policy of confidence in the Provisional Government.

*Pravda* No. 42,  
May 10 (April 27), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 274-76

## 7

# RESOLUTION ON THE QUESTION OF REVISING THE PARTY PROGRAMME<sup>68</sup>

The Conference considers it necessary to revise the Party Programme along the following lines:

1. Evaluating imperialism and the epoch of imperialist wars in connection with the approaching socialist revolution; fighting against the distortion of Marxism by the "defencists", who have forgotten Marx's slogan—"The working men have no country"<sup>69</sup>;

2. Amending the theses and clauses dealing with the state; such amendment is to be in the nature of a demand for a democratic



proletarian-peasant republic (i.e., a type of state functioning without police, without a standing army, and without a privileged bureaucracy), and not for a bourgeois parliamentary republic;

3. Eliminating or amending what is out of date in the political programme;

4. Altering a number of points in the political minimum programme, so as to state more consistent democratic demands with greater precision;

5. Completely changing the economic part of the minimum programme, which in very many places is out of date, and points relating to public education;

6. Revising the agrarian programme in accordance with the adopted resolution on the agrarian question;

7. Inserting a demand for nationalisation of a number of syndicates, etc., now ripe for such a step;

8. Adding an analysis of the main trends in modern socialism.

The Conference instructs the Central Committee to work out, within two months, on the basis of the above suggestions, a draft for the Party Programme which is to be submitted for approval to the Party congress. The Conference calls upon all organisations and all Party members to consider drafts of the programme, to correct them, and to work out counterdrafts.

Supplement to *Soldatskaya Pravda* No 13,  
May 16 (9), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp 280-81

## 8 REPORT ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION APRIL 28 (MAY 11)

### MINUTES

Comrades, the agrarian question was threshed out so thoroughly by our Party during the first revolution that by this time, I think, our ideas on the subject are pretty well defined. Indirect proof of this is to be found in the fact that the committee of the Conference composed of comrades interested and fully versed in this subject have agreed on the proposed draft resolution without making any substantial corrections. I shall therefore confine myself to very brief remarks. And since all members have proof-sheets of the draft, there is no need to read it in full.

The present growth of the agrarian movement throughout Russia is perfectly obvious and undeniable. Our Party Programme, proposed by the Mensheviks and adopted by the Stockholm Congress in 1906,<sup>70</sup> was refuted even in the course of the first Russian

revolution. At that Congress the Mensheviks succeeded in getting their programme of municipalisation adopted. The essence of their programme was as follows: the peasant lands, communal and homestead, were to remain the property of the peasants while the landed estates were to be taken over by local self-government bodies. One of the Mensheviks' chief arguments in favour of such a programme was that the peasants would never understand the transfer of peasant land to anyone but themselves. Anyone acquainted with the Minutes of the Stockholm Congress will recollect that this argument was particularly stressed both by Maslov, who made the report, and by Kostrov. We should not forget, as is often done nowadays, that this happened before the First Duma, when there was no objective information about the character of the peasant movement and its strength. Everyone knew that Russia was all aflame with the agrarian revolution, but no one knew how the agrarian movement would be organised, or in what direction the peasant revolution would develop. It was impossible to check whether the opinions expressed by the Congress were the real and practical views held by the peasants themselves. This was why the Mensheviks' argument had carried such weight. Soon after the Stockholm Congress, we received the first serious indication of how the peasants viewed this question. In both the First and the Second Dumas, the peasants themselves put forward the Trudovik "Bill of the 104".<sup>71</sup> I made a special study of the signatures to this bill, carefully studied the views of the various deputies, their class affiliations, and the extent to which they may be called peasants. I stated categorically in my book, which was burned by the tsarist censor but which I will republish,<sup>72</sup> that the overwhelming majority of these 104 signatories were peasants. That bill called for the nationalisation of the land. The peasants said that the entire land would become the property of the state.

How, then, are we to account for the fact that in both Dumas the deputies representing the peasants of all Russia preferred nationalisation to the measure proposed in both Dumas by the Mensheviks from the point of view of the peasants' interests? The Mensheviks proposed that the peasants retain the ownership of their own lands, and that only the landed estates should be given to the people; the peasants, however, maintained that the entire land should be given to the people. How are we to account for this? The Socialist-Revolutionaries say that owing to their commune organisation the Russian peasants favour socialisation, the labour principle. All this phraseology is absolutely devoid of common sense, it is nothing but words. But how are we to account for this? I think the peasants came to this conclusion because all land-ownership in Russia, both peasants' and landowners', communal and homestead, is permeated with old, semi-feudal relationships,

and the peasants, considering market conditions, had to demand the transfer of the land to all the people. The peasants say that the tangle of old agrarian life can only be unraveled by nationalisation. Their point of view is bourgeois; by equalitarian land tenure they mean the confiscation of the landed estates, but not the equalisation of individual proprietors. By nationalisation they mean an actual reallotment of all the land among the peasants. This is a grand bourgeois project. No peasant spoke about equalisation or socialisation; but they all said it was impossible to wait any longer, that all the land had to be cleared, in other words, that farming could not be carried on in the old way under twentieth-century conditions. The Stolypin Reform has since then confused the land question still more.<sup>73</sup> That is what the peasants have in mind when they demand nationalisation. It means a reallotment of all the land. There are to be no varied forms of landownership. There is not the slightest suggestion of socialisation. This demand by the peasants is called equalitarian because, as a brief summary of the statistics relating to land holdings in 1905 shows, 300 peasant families held as much land (2,000 dessiatines) as one landowner's family. In this sense it is, of course, equalitarian, but it does not imply that all small farms are to be equalised. The Bill of the 104 shows the opposite.

These are the essential points that have to be made in order to give scientific support to the view that nationalisation in Russia, as far as bourgeois democracy is concerned, is necessary. But it is also necessary for another reason—it deals a mighty blow at private ownership of the means of production. It is simply absurd to imagine that after the abolition of private property in land everything in Russia will remain as before.

Then follow some practical conclusions and demands. Of the minor amendments in the draft I shall call attention to the following. The first point reads: "The party of the proletariat will support with all its might the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates. . . ." Instead of "will support" we ought to say "will fight for". . . . Our point of view is not that the peasants have not enough land and that they need more. That is the current opinion. We say that the landed estates are the basis of oppression that crushes the peasants and keeps them backward. The question is not whether the peasants have or have not enough land. Down with serfdom!—this is the way the issue should be stated from the point of view of the revolutionary class struggle, and not from the point of view of those officials who try to figure out how much land they have and by what norms it should be allotted. I suggest that the order of points 2 and 3 should be reversed, because, to us, the thing that matters is revolutionary initiative, and the law must be the result of it. *If you wait until*

*the law is written, and yourselves do not develop revolutionary initiative, you will have neither the law nor the land.*

People very often object to nationalisation because, they say, it requires a colossal bureaucratic apparatus. That is true, but state landownership implies that every peasant is leasing the land from the state. The subletting of leaseholds is prohibited. But the question of how much and what kind of land the peasant shall lease must be entirely settled by the proper democratic, not bureaucratic, organ of authority.

For "farm-hands" we substitute "agricultural labourers". Several comrades declared that the word "farm-hand" was offensive; objections were raised to this word. It should be deleted.

We should not speak now of proletarian-peasant committees or Soviets in connection with the settlement of the land question, for, as we see, the peasants have set up Soviets of Soldiers' Deputies, thus creating a division between the proletariat and the peasantry.

The petty-bourgeois defencist parties, as we know, stand for the land question being put off until the Constituent Assembly meets. We are for the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants in a highly organised manner. We are emphatically against anarchic seizing of land. You propose that the peasants enter into agreements with the landowners. We say that the land should be taken over and cultivated right now if we wish to avert famine, to save the country from the debacle which is advancing upon it with incredible speed. One cannot now accept the prescriptions offered by Shingaryov and the Cadets, who suggest waiting for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the date of which has not been fixed yet, or making arrangements with the landowners for renting land. The peasants are already seizing the land without paying for it, or paying only a quarter of the rent.

One comrade has brought a local resolution, from Penza Gubernia, saying that the peasants are seizing the landowners' agricultural implements, which however they do not divide among the households, but convert into common property. They are establishing a definite order of sequence, a rule, for using these implements to cultivate all the land. In resorting to such measures, they are guided by the desire to increase agricultural production. This is a matter of principle of tremendous significance, for all that the landowners and capitalists shout about it being anarchy. But if you are going to chatter and shout about this being anarchy, while the peasants sit back and wait, then you will indeed have anarchy. The peasants have shown that they understand farming conditions and social control better than the government officials, and apply such control a hundred times more efficiently.

Such a measure, which is doubtless quite practicable in a small village, inevitably leads to more sweeping measures. When the peasant comes to learn this—and he has already begun to learn it—the knowledge of bourgeois professors will not be needed; he will himself come to the conclusion that it is essential to utilise the agricultural implements, not only in the small farms, but for the cultivation of all the land. How they do this is unimportant. We do not know whether they combine their individual plots for common ploughing and sowing or not, and it does not matter if they do it differently. What does matter is that the peasants are fortunate in not having to face a large number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who style themselves Marxists and Social-Democrats, and with a grave mien lecture the people about the time not yet being ripe for a socialist revolution and that therefore the peasants must not take the land immediately. Fortunately there are few such gentlemen in the Russian countryside. If the peasants contented themselves merely with taking the land by arrangement with the landowners, and failed to apply their experience collectively, failure would be inevitable, and the peasant committees would become a mere toy, a meaningless game. This is why we propose to add Point 8\* to the draft resolution.

Once we know that the local peasants have themselves taken this initiative, it is our duty to say that we approve and recommend this initiative. Only this can serve as a guarantee that the revolution will not be limited to formal measures, that the struggle against the crisis will not remain a mere subject for departmental discussion and Shingaryov's epistles, but that the peasants will actually go ahead in an organised way to combat famine and to increase production.

First published in full in 1921  
in N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov), *Works*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp 282-87

## 9

### RESOLUTION ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION

The existence of landed estates in Russia is the material mainstay of the power of the feudal landowners and a guarantee of the possible restoration of the monarchy. This system of landownership necessarily condemns the great mass of Russia's population, the peasantry, to pauperism, bondage, and a down-

\* See p 104 of the present volume.—Ed.

trodden existence, and the entire country to backwardness in every sphere of life.

Peasant landownership in Russia, both of allotment land (communal and homestead) and private land (leased or purchased), is fettered all round, from top to bottom, by old semi-feudal ties and relationships, by the division of the peasants into categories inherited from the time of serfdom, by the open field system, and so on, and so forth. The need for breaking down all these antiquated and harmful restrictions, for "clearing" the land, and reconstructing and readjusting all the relations of landownership and agriculture to the new conditions of Russian and world economy, forms the material foundation of the peasants' urge towards the nationalisation of *all* the land in the state.

Whatever the petty-bourgeois utopias in which all Narodnik parties and groups array the struggle of the peasant masses against feudalist big landownership and all the feudal fetters of the entire system of landownership and land tenure in Russia, that struggle is itself an expression of a thoroughly bourgeois-democratic, undoubtedly progressive, and economically essential striving resolutely to break all those fetters.

Nationalisation of the land, though being a bourgeois measure, implies freedom for the class struggle and freedom of land tenure from all non-bourgeois adjuncts to the greatest possible degree conceivable in a capitalist society. Moreover, nationalisation of the land, representing as it does the abolition of private ownership of land, would, in effect, deal such a powerful blow to private ownership of all the means of production in general that the party of the proletariat must facilitate such a reform in every possible way.

On the other hand, the well-to-do peasants of Russia long ago evolved the elements of a peasant bourgeoisie, and the Stolypin agrarian reform has undoubtedly strengthened, augmented, and reinforced these elements. At the other pole of the rural population, the agricultural wage-workers, the proletarians, and the mass of semi-proletarian peasantry, who stand close to the proletarians, have likewise gained in strength and numbers.

The more determined and consistent the break-up and elimination of the landed estates and the more determined and consistent the bourgeois-democratic agrarian reform in Russia in general, the more vigorous and speedy will be the development of the class struggle of the agricultural proletariat against the well-to-do peasants (the peasant bourgeoisie).

The fate and the outcome of the Russian revolution—unless the incipient proletarian revolution in Europe exercises a direct and powerful influence on our country—will depend on whether the urban proletariat succeeds in rallying the rural

proletariat together with the mass of rural semi-proletarians behind it, or whether this mass follows the lead of the peasant bourgeoisie, which is gravitating towards an alliance with Guchkov and Milyukov, with the capitalists and landowners, and towards the counter-revolution in general.

In view of this class situation and balance of forces the Conference resolves that:

1) The Party of the proletariat will fight with all its might for the immediate and complete confiscation of all landed estates in Russia (and also crown lands, church lands, etc., etc.)<sup>74</sup>;

2) The Party will vigorously advocate the immediate transfer of all lands to the peasantry organised in Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, or in other organs of local self-government elected in a really democratic way and entirely independent of the landowners and officials;

3) The Party of the proletariat demands the nationalisation of all the land in the country; nationalisation, which signifies the transfer of the right of ownership of all land to the state, vests the right of administering the land in local democratic institutions;

4) The Party must wage a determined struggle, on the one hand, against the Provisional Government, which, both through the mouth of Shingaryov and by its collective utterances, is trying to force the peasants to come to a "voluntary agreement with the landowners", i.e., is trying virtually to impose upon them a reform which suits the interests of the landowners, and is threatening the peasants with punishment for "arbitrary action", that is, with the use of violence by a minority of the population (the landowners and capitalists) against the majority; on the other hand, against the petty-bourgeois vacillations of the majority of the Narodniks and the Menshevik Social-Democrats, who are advising the peasants not to take all the land pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly;

5) The Party advises the peasants to take the land in an organised way, not allowing the slightest damage to property, and taking measures to increase production;

6) Agrarian reforms, by and large, can be successful and durable only provided the whole state is democratised, i.e., provided, on the one hand, the police, the standing army, and the privileged bureaucracy are abolished, and provided, on the other, there exists a system of broad local self-government completely free from supervision and tutelage from above;

7) The separate and independent organisation of the agricultural proletariat must be undertaken immediately and everywhere, both in the form of Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies (as well as of separate Soviets of deputies of the semi-

proletarian peasantry) and in the form of proletarian groups or factions within the general Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, in all local and municipal government bodies, etc.;

8) The Party must support the initiative of those peasant committees which in a number of localities in Russia are handing over the livestock and agricultural implements of the land-owners to the peasants organised in those committees, to be used in a socially regulated manner for the cultivation of all the land;

9) The Party of the proletariat must advise the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to strive to convert every landed estate into a fair-sized model farm to be run on public lines by the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies under the direction of agricultural experts and with the application of the best technique.

*Pravda* No. 45.  
May 13 (April 30), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 21  
pp. 290-93

## 10 RESOLUTION ON THE SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES

The Conference has discussed the reports and communications of comrades working in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in different parts of Russia and states that:

In many provincial areas the revolution is progressing in the following way: the proletariat and the peasantry, on their own initiative, are organising Soviets and dismissing the old authorities; a proletarian and peasant militia is being set up; all lands are being transferred to the peasants; workers' control over the factories and the eight-hour day have been introduced and wages have been increased; production is being maintained, and workers control the distribution of food, etc.

This growth of the revolution in the provinces in depth and scope is, on the one hand, the growth of a movement for transferring all power to the Soviets and putting the workers and peasants themselves in control of production. On the other hand, it serves as a guarantee for the build-up of forces, on a national scale, for the second stage of the revolution, which must transfer all state power to the Soviets or to other organs directly expressing the will of the majority of the nation (organs of local self-government, the Constituent Assembly, etc.).

In the capitals and in a few other large cities the task of transferring state power to the Soviets is particularly difficult and



requires an especially long period of preparation of the proletariat's forces. This is where the largest forces of the bourgeoisie are concentrated, where a policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie is most strongly in evidence, a policy which often holds back the revolutionary initiative of the masses and weakens their independence; this is particularly dangerous in view of the leading role of these Soviets for the provinces.

It is, therefore, the task of the proletarian party, on the one hand, to support in every possible way the indicated development of the revolution locally, and, on the other, to conduct a systematic struggle within the Soviets (by means of propaganda and new elections) for the triumph of the proletarian line. The party must concentrate all its efforts and all its attention on winning over the mass of workers and soldiers, and must draw a line between the policy of the proletariat and that of the petty bourgeoisie, between the internationalist policy and the defencist policy, between the revolutionary and the opportunist policy. The party must organise and arm the workers and build up their forces for the next stage of the revolution.

The Conference repeats that it is necessary to carry out many-sided activity within the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, to increase the number of Soviets, to consolidate their power, and to weld together our Party's proletarian internationalist groups within the Soviets.

*Pravda* No. 46,  
May 15 (2), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 295-96

## 11 SPEECH ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION APRIL 29 (MAY 12)

### MINUTES

Beginning from 1903, when our Party adopted its programme, we have been encountering violent opposition on the part of the Polish comrades. If you study the Minutes of the Second Congress you will see that they were using the same arguments then that they are using now, and that the Polish Social-Democrats walked out from that Congress because they held that recognition of the right of nations to self determination was unacceptable to them. Ever since then we have been coming up against the same question. Though imperialism already existed in 1903, the Polish Social-

Democrats made no mention of it in their arguments. They are making the same strange and monstrous error now as they were then. These people want to put our Party's stand on a par with that of the chauvinists.

Owing to long oppression by Russia Poland's policy is a wholly nationalist one, and the whole Polish nation is obsessed with one idea—revenge on the Muscovites. No one has oppressed the Poles more than the Russian people, who served in the hands of the tsars as the executioner of Polish freedom. In no nation does hatred of Russia sit so deep as with the Poles; no nation dislikes Russia so intensely as the Poles. As a result we have a strange thing. Because of the Polish bourgeoisie, Poland has become an obstacle to the socialist movement. The whole world could go to the devil so long as Poland was free. Of course, this way of putting the question is a mockery of internationalism. Of course, Poland is now a victim of violence, but for the Polish nationalists to count on Russia liberating Poland—that would be treason to the International. The Polish nationalists have so imbued the Polish people with their views that this is how the situation is regarded in Poland.

The Polish Social-Democratic comrades have rendered a great historic service by advancing the slogan of internationalism and declaring that the fraternal union of the proletariat of all countries is of supreme importance to them and that they will never go to war for the liberation of Poland. This is to their credit, and this is why we have always regarded only these Polish Social-Democrats as socialists. The others are patriots, Polish Plekhanovs. But this peculiar position, when, in order to safeguard socialism, people were forced to struggle against a rabid and morbid nationalism, has produced a strange state of affairs: comrades come to us saying that we must give up the idea of Poland's freedom, her right to secession.

Why should we Great Russians, who have been oppressing more nations than any other people, deny the right to secession for Poland, Ukraine, or Finland? We are asked to become chauvinists, because by doing so we would make the position of Social-Democrats in Poland less difficult. We do not pretend to seek to liberate Poland, because the Polish people live between two states that are capable of fighting. Instead of telling the Polish workers that only those Social-Democrats are real democrats who maintain that the Polish people ought to be free, since there is no place for chauvinists in a socialist party, the Polish Social-Democrats argue that, just because they find the union with Russian workers advantageous, they are opposed to Poland's secession. They have a perfect right to do so. But people don't want to understand that to strengthen internationalism you do not have

to repeat the same words. What you have to do is to stress, in Russia, the freedom of secession for oppressed nations and, in Poland, their freedom to unite. Freedom to unite implies freedom to secede. We Russians must emphasise freedom to secede, while the Poles must emphasise freedom to unite.

We notice here a number of sophisms involving a complete renunciation of Marxism. Comrade Pyatakov's stand repeats that of Rosa Luxembourg . . . \* (Holland is an example). . . \* This is how Comrade Pyatakov reasons, and this is how he refutes himself, for in theory he denies freedom of secession, but to the people he says that anyone opposing freedom of secession is not a socialist. Comrade Pyatakov has been saying things here that are hopelessly muddled. In Western Europe most countries settled their national questions long ago. It is Western Europe that is referred to when it is said that the national question has been settled. Comrade Pyatakov, however, puts this where it does not belong—to Eastern Europe, and we find ourselves in a ridiculous position.

Just think of the dreadful mess that results! Finland is right next door to us. Comrade Pyatakov has no definite answer for Finland and gets all mixed up. In yesterday's *Rabochaya Gazeta* you read that the movement for separation is growing in Finland. Finns arriving here tell us that separatism is growing there because the Cadets refuse to grant the country complete autonomy. A crisis is approaching there, dissatisfaction with Governor-General Rodichev is rife, but *Rabochaya Gazeta* writes that the Finns should wait for the Constituent Assembly, because an agreement will there be reached between Finland and Russia. What do they mean by agreement? The Finns must declare that they are entitled to decide their destiny in their own way, and any Great Russian who denies this right is a chauvinist. It would be another thing if we said to the Finnish worker: Decide what is best for yourself. . . \*

Comrade Pyatakov simply rejects our slogan, saying that it means giving no slogan for the socialist revolution, but he himself gives no appropriate slogan. The method of socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with frontiers" is all muddled up. We have not succeeded in publishing the article in which I called this view "imperialist Economism".\*\* What does the "method" of socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with frontiers" mean? We maintain that the state is necessary, and a state presupposes frontiers. The state, of course, may hold a bourgeois government, but we need the Soviets. But even Soviets are confronted with the question of frontiers. What does "Down with

frontiers" mean? It is the beginning of anarchy. . . . The "method" of socialist revolution under the slogan "Down with frontiers" is simply a mess. When the time is ripe for socialist revolution, when it finally occurs, it will spread to other countries. We shall help it along, but in what manner, we do not know. "The method of socialist revolution" is just a meaningless phrase. We stand for the settlement of problems which the bourgeois revolution has left unsolved. Our attitude to the separatist movement is indifferent, neutral. If Finland, Poland or the Ukraine secede from Russia, there is nothing bad in that. What is wrong with it? Anyone who says that is a chauvinist. One must be mad to continue Tsar Nicholas's policy. Didn't Norway secede from Sweden? Alexander I and Napoleon once bartered nations, the tsars once traded Poland. Are we to continue this policy of the tsars? This is repudiation of the tactics of internationalism, this is chauvinism at its worst. What is wrong with Finland seceding? After the secession of Norway from Sweden mutual trust increased between the two peoples, between the proletariat of these countries. The Swedish landowners wanted to start a war, but the Swedish workers refused to be drawn into such a war.

All the Finns want now is autonomy. We are for Finland receiving complete freedom, because then there will be greater trust in Russian democracy and the Finns will not separate. While Mr. Rodichev goes to Finland to haggle over autonomy, our Finnish comrades come here and say, "We want autonomy." But what they get is a broadside, and the answer: "Wait for the Constituent Assembly." But we say: "Any Russian socialist who denies Finland freedom is a chauvinist."

We say that frontiers are determined by the will of the population. Russia, don't you dare fight over Courland! Germany, get your armies out of Courland! That is how we solve the secession problem. The proletariat cannot use force, because it must not prevent the peoples from obtaining their freedom. Only when the socialist revolution has become a reality, and not a method, will the slogan "Down with frontiers" be a correct slogan. Then we shall say: Comrades, come to us. . . .

War is a different matter entirely. If need be, we shall not draw the line at a revolutionary war. We are not pacifists. . . . When we have Milyukov sitting here and sending Rodichev to Finland to shamefully haggle with the Finnish people, we say to the Russian people: Don't you dare coerce Finland; no nation can be free that oppresses other nations.<sup>75</sup> In the resolution concerning Borgbjerg<sup>76</sup> we say: Withdraw your troops and let the nation settle the question itself. But, if the Soviet takes over power tomorrow, that will not be a "method of socialist revolution", and we shall then say: Germany, get your troops out of Poland, and

Russia, get your troops out of Armenia. If we did otherwise we should be deceiving people.

Comrade Dzerzhinsky tells us that in his oppressed Poland everybody is a chauvinist. But not a single Pole has said a word about Finland or the Ukraine. We have been arguing over this so much since 1903 that it is becoming difficult to talk about it. Do as you please. . . . Anyone who does not accept this point of view is an annexationist and a chauvinist. We are for a fraternal union of all nations. If there is a Ukrainian republic and a Russian republic, there will be closer contact and greater trust between the two. If the Ukrainians see that we have a Soviet republic, they will not secede, but if we have a Milyukov republic, they will. When Comrade Pyatakoff said in self-contradiction that he is against the forcible retention of nations within the frontiers, he actually recognised the right of nations to self-determination. We certainly do not want the peasant in Khiva to live under the Khan of Khiva. By developing our revolution we shall influence the oppressed people. Propaganda among the oppressed mass must follow only this line.

Any Russian socialist who does not recognise Finland's and the Ukraine's right to freedom will degenerate into a chauvinist. And no sophisms or references to his "method" will ever help him to justify himself.

First published in full in 1921  
in *N. Lenin v. Ulanov, Uprav.*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 24,  
pp. 297-301

## 12

### RESOLUTION ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The policy of national oppression, inherited from the autocracy and monarchy, is maintained by the landowners, capitalists, and petty bourgeoisie in order to protect their class privileges and to cause disunity among the workers of the various nationalities. Modern imperialism, which increases the tendency to subjugate weaker nations, is a new factor intensifying national oppression.

The elimination of national oppression, if at all achievable in capitalist society, is possible only under a consistently democratic republican system and state administration that guarantee complete equality for all nations and languages.

The right of all the nations forming part of Russia freely to secede and form independent states must be recognised. To deny them this right, or to fail to take measures guaranteeing

its practical realisation, is equivalent to supporting a policy of seizure or annexation. Only the recognition by the proletariat of the right of nations to secede can ensure complete solidarity among the workers of the various nations and help to bring the nations closer together on truly democratic lines.

The conflict which has arisen at the present time between Finland and the Russian Provisional Government strikingly demonstrates that denial of the right to free secession leads to a direct continuation of the policy of tsarism.

The right of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the advisability of secession by a given nation at a given moment. The party of the proletariat must decide the latter question quite independently in each particular case, having regard to the interests of social development as a whole and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.

The party demands broad regional autonomy, the abolition of supervision from above, the abolition of a compulsory official language, and the fixing of the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions in accordance with the economic and social conditions, the national composition of the population, and so forth, as assessed by the local population itself.

The party of the proletariat emphatically rejects what is known as "national cultural autonomy", under which education, etc., is removed from the control of the state and put in the control of some kind of national diets. National cultural autonomy artificially divides the workers living in one locality, and even working in the same industrial enterprise, according to their various "national cultures"; in other words, it strengthens the ties between the workers and the bourgeois culture of their nations, whereas the aim of the Social-Democrats is to develop the international culture of the world proletariat.

The party demands that a fundamental law be embodied in the constitution annulling all privileges enjoyed by any one nation and all infringements of the rights of national minorities.

The interests of the working class demand that the workers of all nationalities in Russia should have common proletarian organisations: political, trade union, co-operative educational institutions, and so forth. Only the merging of the workers of the various nationalities into such common organisations will make it possible for the proletariat to wage a successful struggle against international Capital and bourgeois nationalism.

## 13

**RESOLUTION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION**

The world war, brought about by the struggle of world trusts and banking capital for domination over the world market, has already led to the mass destruction of material values, to exhaustion of productive forces, and to such a growth in the war industry that it is impossible to produce even the absolutely necessary minimum of consumer goods and means of production.

The present war, therefore, has brought humanity to an impasse and placed it on the brink of ruin.

The objective conditions for a socialist revolution, which undoubtedly existed even before the war in the more developed and advanced countries, have been ripening with tremendous rapidity as a result of the war. Small and middle enterprises are being squeezed out and ruined at a faster rate than ever. The concentration and internationalisation of capital are making gigantic strides; monopoly capitalism is developing into state monopoly capitalism. In a number of countries regulation of production and distribution by society is being introduced by force of circumstances. Some countries are introducing universal labour conscription.

Under private ownership of the means of production, all these steps towards greater monopolisation and control of production by the state are inevitably accompanied by intensified exploitation of the working people, by an increase in oppression; it becomes more difficult to resist the exploiters, and reaction and military despotism grow. At the same time these steps inevitably lead to a tremendous growth in the profits of the big capitalists at the expense of all other sections of the population. The working people for decades + come are forced to pay tribute to the capitalists in the form of interest payments on war loans running into thousands of millions. But with private ownership of the means of production abolished and state power passing completely to the proletariat, these very conditions are a pledge of success for society's transformation that will do away with the exploitation of man by man and ensure the well-being of everyone.

\* \* \*

On the other hand, the course of events is clearly confirming the forecast of the socialists of the whole world who, precisely in connection with the imperialist war, then impending and now raging, unanimously declared in the 1912 Basle Manifesto that a *proletarian revolution* was inevitable.

The Russian revolution is only the first stage of the first of the proletarian revolutions which are the inevitable result of war.

In all countries a spirit of rebellion against the capitalist class is growing among the masses, and the proletariat is becoming aware that only the transfer of power to the proletariat and the abolition of private ownership of the means of production can save humanity from ruin.

In all countries, especially in the most advanced, Britain and Germany, hundreds of socialists who have not gone over to the side of "their own" national bourgeoisie have been thrown into prison by the capitalist governments. By this action the latter have clearly demonstrated their fear of the mounting proletarian revolution. In Germany the impending revolution is apparent both in the mass strikes, which have assumed particularly large proportions in recent weeks, and in the growth of fraternisation between the German and Russian soldiers at the front.

Fraternal trust and unity are gradually being restored among the workers of different countries, the very workers who are now killing each other in the interests of the capitalists. This, in turn, will create conditions for united revolutionary action by the workers of different countries. Only such action can guarantee the most systematic development and the most likely success of the world socialist revolution.

\* \* \*

Operating as it does in one of the most backward countries of Europe amidst a vast population of small peasants, the proletariat of Russia cannot aim at immediately putting into effect socialist changes.

But it would be a grave error, and in effect even a complete desertion to the bourgeoisie, to infer from this that the working class must support the bourgeoisie, or that it must keep its activities within limits acceptable to the petty bourgeoisie, or that the proletariat must renounce its leading role in the matter of explaining to the people the urgency of taking a number of practical steps towards socialism for which the time is now ripe.

These steps are: first, nationalisation of the land. This measure, which does not directly go beyond the framework of the bourgeois system, would, at the same time, be a heavy blow at private ownership of the means of production, and as such would strengthen the influence of the socialist proletariat over the semi-proletariat in the countryside.

The next steps are the establishment of state control over all banks, and their amalgamation into a single central bank; also control over the insurance agencies and big capitalist syndicates (for example, the Sugar Syndicate, the Coal Syndicate, the Metal Syndicate, etc.), and the gradual introduction of a more just pro-



gressive tax on incomes and properties. Economically, these measures are timely; technically, they can be carried out immediately; politically, they are *likely* to receive the support of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, who have everything to gain by these reforms.

The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies, which now cover Russia with a dense and growing network, could also introduce, parallel with the above measures, universal labour conscription, for on the one hand the character of the Soviets guarantees that all these new reforms will be introduced only when an overwhelming majority of the people has clearly and firmly realised the practical need for them; on the other hand their character guarantees that the reforms will not be sponsored by the police and officials, but will be carried out by way of voluntary participation of the organised and armed masses of the proletariat and peasantry in the management of their own affairs.

All these and other similar measures can and should be not only discussed and prepared for enforcement on a national scale in the event of all power passing to the proletarians and semi-proletarians, but also implemented by the local revolutionary organs of power of the whole people when the opportunity arises.

Great care and discretion should be exercised in carrying out the above measures; a solid majority of the population must be won over and this majority must be clearly convinced of the country's practical preparedness for any particular measure. This is the direction in which the class-conscious vanguard of the workers must focus its attention and efforts, because it is the bounden duty of these workers to help the peasants find a way out of the present debacle.

---

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE SEVENTH (APRIL) ALL-RUSSIA CONFERENCE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**

Workers, comrades!

The All-Russia Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, united by its Central Committee and known simply as the Bolshevik Party, is over.

The Conference has adopted very important resolutions on all the fundamental issues of the revolution and the full text of them is published below.

The revolution is passing through a crisis. This could be seen in the streets of Petrograd and Moscow between April 19 and April 21. This has been admitted by the Provisional Government. It has been admitted by the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Still further confirmation of it has been given, as I pen these lines, by the resignation of Guchkov.

This crisis of state power, this crisis of the revolution, is no accident. The Provisional Government is a government of land-owners and capitalists who are tied up with Russian and Anglo-French capital and compelled to continue the imperialist war. But the soldiers are worn out by the war, they are becoming more and more aware that the war is being fought in the interests of the capitalists; the soldiers do not want war. Furthermore, the grim spectre of an appalling debacle, of famine and complete economic ruin is advancing upon Russia and other countries.

The Petrograd Soviet has also got into a blind alley by entering into an agreement with the Provisional Government, by supporting it, by supporting the loan, and, consequently, supporting the war. The Soviet is responsible for the Provisional Government, and, seeing no way out of the situation, has also got itself into a muddle through this agreement with the capitalist government.

At this great historic moment, when the future of the revolution is at stake, when the capitalists are torn between despair and the thought of shooting down workers, our Party appeals to the people, saying in its Conference resolutions:

We must understand which *classes* are the motive force of the revolution. Their various aspirations must be soberly assessed. The capitalist cannot travel the same road as the worker. Petty proprietors can neither fully trust the capitalists nor all immediately agree on a close fraternal alliance with the workers. Only when we understand the difference between these classes shall we be able to find the correct road for the revolution.

The decisions of our Conference on all the basic issues of the people's life draw a clear line between the interests of the different classes and show that it is absolutely impossible to find a way out of the deadlock unless the policy of trust in and support of the capitalist government is abandoned.

The situation is one of unparalleled difficulty. There is one way out and only one—the transfer of all state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', and other Deputies throughout Russia, from the bottom up. Only if state power passes to the working class supported by most of the peasantry, will it be possible to count on speedily regaining the confidence of the workers of other countries, to count on a mighty European revolution that will throw off the yoke of Capital and put an end to the criminal bloodshed in which the peoples are embroiled. Only if the power passes to the working class supported by most of the peasants shall we be able to cherish the firm hope that the working people will show complete confidence in that power and all, without exception, work selflessly to bring about a transformation of the entire way of life of the people in the interests of those who labour and not in the interests of the capitalists and landowners. Without such selfless work, without a gigantic effort on the part of each and every individual, without firmness and the determination to rebuild life in a new way, without the strict organisation and comradely discipline of all workers and all poor peasants—*without all this there is no way out.*

The war has brought all mankind to the brink of destruction. The capitalists have become deeply involved in the war and are unable to extricate themselves. The whole world faces disaster.

Workers, comrades! The time is drawing near when events will demand new and still greater heroism—the heroism of millions and tens of millions—than you displayed in the glorious days of the revolution of February and March. Prepare yourselves.

Prepare yourselves and remember that if, together with the capitalists, you were able to achieve victory in a few days by a simple outburst of popular wrath, you will need more than that

for victory against the capitalists, for victory over the capitalists. To achieve such a victory, to have the workers and poor peasants take the power, keep that power and make proper use of it, you will need organisation, organisation, and organisation.

Our Party is helping you as much as it can, primarily by bringing home to you the different positions of the different classes and their different strength. The decisions of our Conference are devoted to this, and unless you realise this clearly, organisation does not mean anything. And without organisation action by the millions is impossible, success is impossible.

Don't put your trust in words. Don't be misled by promises. Don't overestimate your strength. Organise at every factory, in every regiment and every company, in every residential block. Work at your organising every day, every hour; do that work yourselves, for this is something you cannot entrust to anybody else. Work to steadily, soundly and indestructibly build up full confidence in the advanced workers on the part of the masses. Such is the main content of all the decisions of our Conference. Such is the main lesson taught by the entire development of the revolution. Such is the one guarantee of success.

Workers, comrades! We call upon you to carry out the hard, serious, untiring work of consolidating the class-conscious, revolutionary proletariat of all countries. This is the one and only way out, the only way to save mankind from the horrors of war and the yoke of Capital.

---

# **FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES<sup>77</sup>**

**JUNE 3-24 (JUNE 16-JULY 7), 1917**

## **SPEECH ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT JUNE 4 (17)**

Comrades, in the brief time at my disposal, I can dwell—and I think this best—only on the main questions of principle raised by the Executive Committee rapporteur and by subsequent speakers.

The first and fundamental issue before us was: *what is this assembly* we are attending, what are these Soviets now gathered at the All-Russia Congress, and what is this revolutionary democracy that people here speak so much about to conceal their utter misunderstanding and complete repudiation of it? To talk about revolutionary democracy at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets and obscure this institution's character, its class composition and its role in the revolution—not to say a word about this and yet lay claim to the title of democrats really is peculiar. They map out a programme to us for a bourgeois parliamentary republic, the sort of programme that has existed all over Western Europe; they map out a programme to us for reforms which are now recognised by all bourgeois governments, including our own. and yet they talk to us about revolutionary democracy. Whom are they talking to? To the Soviets. But I ask you, is there a country in Europe, a bourgeois, democratic, republican country, where anything like these Soviets exists? You have to admit there isn't. Nowhere is there, nor can there be, a similar institution because you must have one or the other: *either* a bourgeois government with "plans" for reforms like those just mapped out to us and proposed dozens of times in every country but remaining on paper, or the institution to which they are now referring, the new type of "government" created by the revolution, examples of which can be found only at a time of greatest revolutionary upsurge, as in France, 1792 and 1871, or in Russia, 1905. The Soviets are an institution which does not exist in any ordinary bourgeois-parliamentary state and cannot exist side by side with a bourgeois

government. They are the new, more democratic type of state which we in our Party resolutions call a peasant-proletarian democratic republic, with power belonging solely to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. People are wrong in thinking that this is a theoretical issue. They are wrong in pretending that it can be evaded and in protesting that at present certain institutions exist side by side with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Yes, they do exist side by side. But this is what breeds countless misunderstandings, conflicts and friction. And this is why the original upswing, the original advance, of the Russian revolution is giving way to stagnation and to those steps backwards which we can now see in our coalition government, in its entire home and foreign policy, in connection with preparations for an imperialist offensive.

One or the other: either the usual bourgeois government, in which case the peasants', workers', soldiers' and other Soviets are useless and will either be broken up by the generals, the counter-revolutionary generals, who keep a hold on the armed forces and pay no heed to Minister Kerensky's fancy speeches, or they will die an inglorious death. They have no other choice. They can neither retreat nor stand still. They can exist only by advancing. This is a type of state not invented by the Russians but advanced by the revolution because the revolution can win in no other way. Within the All-Russia Congress, friction and the struggle of parties for power are inevitable. But this will be the elimination of possible mistakes and illusions through the political experience of the masses themselves (*commotion*), and not through the reports of Ministers who refer to what they said yesterday, what they will write tomorrow and what they will promise the day after tomorrow. This, comrades, is ridiculous from the point of view of the institution created by the Russian revolution and now faced with the question: to be or not to be? The Soviets cannot continue to exist as they do now. Grown people, workers and peasants, are made to meet, adopt resolutions and listen to reports that cannot be subjected to any documentary verification! This kind of institution is a transition to a republic which will establish a stable power without a police and a standing army, not in words alone but in action, a power which cannot yet exist in Western Europe and without which the Russian revolution cannot win in the sense of victory over the landowners and over imperialism.

Without this power there can be no question of our gaining such a victory by ourselves. And the deeper we go into the programme recommended to us here, and into the facts with which we are confronted, the more glaringly the fundamental contradiction stands out. We are told by the rapporteur and by other speakers that the first Provisional Government was a bad one!

But when the Bolsheviks, those wretched Bolsheviks, said, "No support for and no confidence in this government", how often we were accused of "anarchism"! Now everybody says that the previous government was a bad one. But how does the coalition government with its near-socialist Ministers differ from the previous one? Haven't we had enough talk about programmes and drafts? Haven't we had enough of them? Isn't it time to get down to business? A month has passed since May 6 when the coalition government was formed. Look at the facts, look at the ruin prevailing in Russia and other countries involved in the imperialist war. What is the reason for the ruin? The predatory nature of the capitalists. There's your real anarchy. And this is admitted in statements published, not in our newspaper, not in any Bolshevik newspaper—Heaven forbid!—but in the ministerial *Rabochaya Gazeta*, which has reported that industrial coal prices were *raised* by the "revolutionary" government!! The coalition government hasn't changed a thing in this respect. We are asked whether socialism can be introduced in Russia, and whether, generally speaking, radical changes can be made at once. That is all empty talk, comrades. The doctrine of Marx and Engels, as they always explained, says: "Our doctrine is not a dogma, but a guide to action." Nowhere in the world is there pure capitalism developing into pure socialism, nor can there be in war-time. But there is something in between, something new and unprecedented because hundreds of millions of people who have been involved in the criminal war among the capitalists are losing their lives. It is not a question of promising reforms—that is mere talk. It is a question of taking the step we now need.

If you want to talk of "revolutionary" democracy, then you must distinguish this except from *reformist* democracy under a capitalist Ministry, because it is high time to stop talking about "revolutionary democracy", handing out mutual congratulations on "revolutionary democracy", and get on with a *class* definition, as we have been taught by Marxism, and by scientific socialism generally. It is being proposed that we should pass to reformist democracy under capitalist Ministry. That may be all well and good from the standpoint of the usual West-European models. A number of countries, however, are today on the brink of destruction, and we can clearly see the practical measures said to be too complicated to carry out easily, and in need of special elaboration, according to the previous speaker, the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. He said there was no political party in Russia expressing its readiness to assume full power. I reply: "Yes, there is. No party can refuse this, and our Party certainly doesn't. It is ready to take over full power at any moment." (*Applause and laughter.*) You can laugh as much as you please,

but if the Minister confronts us with this question side by side with a party of the Right, he will receive a suitable reply. No party can refuse this. And at a time when liberty still prevails, when threats of arrest and exile to Siberia—threats from the counter-revolutionaries with whom our near-socialist Ministers are sharing government—are still no more than threats, every party says: give us your confidence and we shall give you our programme.

This programme was given by our conference on April 29.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, it is being ignored and not taken as a guide. It seems to need a popular exposition. I shall try to give the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs a popular exposition of our resolution and our programme. With regard to the economic crisis, our programme is immediately—it need not be put off—to demand the publication of all the fabulous profits—running as high as 500 and 800 per cent—which the capitalists are making on war supplies, and not as capitalists in the open market under “pure” capitalism. This is where workers’ control really is necessary and possible. This is a measure which, if you call yourselves “revolutionary” democrats, you should carry out in the name of the Congress, a measure which can be carried out overnight. It is not socialism. It is opening the people’s eyes to the real anarchy and the real playing with imperialism, the playing with the property of the people, with the hundreds of thousands of lives that tomorrow will be lost because we continue to throttle Greece. Make the profits of the capitalists public, arrest fifty or a hundred of the biggest millionaires. Just keep them in custody for a few weeks, if only in the same privileged conditions in which Nicholas Romanov is being held, for the simple purpose of making them reveal the hidden springs, the fraudulent practices, the filth and greed which even under the new government are costing our country thousands and millions every day. That is the chief cause of anarchy and ruin. That is why we say that everything remains as of old, that the coalition government hasn’t changed a thing and has only added a heap of declarations, of pompous statements. However sincere people may be, however sincerely they may wish the working people well, things have not changed—*the same class* remains in power. The policy they are pursuing is not a democratic policy.

You talk to us about “democratisation of the central and local power”. Don’t you know that these words are a novelty only in Russia, and that elsewhere dozens of near-socialist Ministers have given their countries similar promises? What are they worth when we are faced by the real, concrete fact that while the population elects the authorities locally, the elementary principles of democracy are violated by the centre claiming the right to appoint or confirm the local authorities? The capitalists continue to plunder the people’s property. The imperialist war



continues. And yet we are promised reforms, reforms and more reforms, which cannot be accomplished at all under these circumstances, because the war crushes and determines everything. Why do you disagree with those who say the war is *not* being waged over capitalist profits? What is the criterion? It is, first of all, which class is in power, which class continues to be the master, which class continues to make hundreds of thousands of millions from banking and financial operations. It is the same capitalist class and the war therefore continues to be imperialist. Neither the first Provisional Government nor the government with the near-socialist Ministers has changed anything. The secret treaties remain secret. Russia is fighting for the Straits, fighting to continue Lyakhov's policy in Persia,<sup>80</sup> and so on.

I know you don't want this, that most of you don't want it, and that the Ministers don't want it, because no one can want it, for it means the slaughter of hundreds of millions of people. But take the offensive which the Milyukovs and Maklakovs are now talking about so much. They know full well what that means. They know it is linked with the question of power, with the question of revolution. We are told we must distinguish between political and strategic issues. It is ridiculous to raise this question at all. The Cadets perfectly understand that the point at issue is a political one.

It is slander to say the revolutionary struggle for peace that has begun from below might lead to a separate peace treaty. The first step we should take if we had power would be to arrest the biggest capitalists and cut all the threads of their intrigues. Without this, all talk about peace without annexations and indemnities is utterly meaningless. Our second step would be to declare to all people over the head of their governments that we regard all capitalists as robbers—Tereshchenko, who is not a bit better than Milyukov, just a little less stupid, the French capitalists, the British capitalists, and all the rest.

Your own *Izvestia*<sup>81</sup> has got into a muddle and proposes to keep the status quo instead of peace without annexations and indemnities. Our idea of peace "without annexations" is different. Even the Peasant Congress<sup>82</sup> comes nearer the truth when it speaks of a "federal" republic, thereby expressing the idea that the Russian republic does not want to oppress any nation, either in the new or in the old way, and does not want to force any nation, either Finland or the Ukraine, with both of whom the War Minister is trying so hard to find fault and with whom impermissible and intolerable conflicts are being created. We want a single and undivided republic of Russia with a firm government. But a firm government can be secured only by the voluntary agreement of all people concerned. "Revolutionary democracy" are big words, but

they are being applied to a government that by its petty fault-finding is complicating the problem of the Ukraine and Finland, which do not even want to secede. They only say, "Don't postpone the application of the elementary principles of democracy until the Constituent Assembly!"

A peace treaty without annexations and indemnities cannot be concluded until you have renounced your own annexations. It is ridiculous, a comedy, every worker in Europe is laughing at us, saying: You talk very eloquently and call on the people to overthrow the bankers, but you send your own bankers into the Ministry. Arrest them, expose their tricks, get to know the hidden springs! But that you don't do although you have powerful organisations which cannot be resisted. You have gone through 1905 and 1917. You know that revolution is not made to order, that revolutions in other countries were made by the hard and bloody method of insurrection, and in Russia there is no group, no class, that would resist the power of the Soviets. In Russia, this revolution can, by way of exception, be a peaceful one. Were this revolution to propose peace to all peoples today or tomorrow, by breaking with all the capitalist classes, both France and Germany, their people, that is, would accept very soon, because these countries are perishing, because Germany's position is hopeless, because she cannot save herself, and because France— (*Chairman:* "Your time is up.")

I shall finish in half a minute. (*Commotion; requests from the audience that the speaker continue; protests and applause.*)

(*Chairman:* "I inform the Congress that the Steering Committee proposes the speaker's time be extended. Any objections? The majority are in favour of an extension.")

I stopped at the point that if the revolutionary democrats in Russia were democrats in fact and not merely in words, they would further the revolution and not compromise with the capitalists, not talk about peace without annexations and indemnities but abolish annexations by Russia, and declare in so many words that they consider all annexations criminal and predatory. It would then be possible to avert the imperialist offensive which is threatening death to thousands and millions of people over the partitioning of Persia and the Balkans. The way to peace would then be open, not an easy way—we do not say it is easy—and one which does not preclude a truly revolutionary war.

We do not put this question as Bazarov does in today's *Novaya Zhizn*.<sup>83</sup> All we say is that Russia has been placed in such a position that at the end of the imperialist war her tasks are easier than might have been expected. And her geographical position is such that any power would have a hard job on its hands if it risked using capital and its predatory interests and

risked rising against the Russian working class and the semi-proletariat associated with it, i.e., the poor peasants. Germany is on the brink of defeat, and since the war was joined by the United States, which wants to swallow up Mexico and which tomorrow will probably start fighting Japan, Germany's position has become hopeless, and she will be destroyed. France, who suffers more than the others because of her geographical position and whose state of exhaustion is reaching the limit—this country, while not starving as much as Germany, has lost infinitely more people than Germany. Now if the first step were to restrict the profits of the Russian capitalists and deprive them of all possibility of raking in hundreds of millions in profits, if you were to propose to *all* nations a peace treaty directed against the capitalists of *all* countries and openly declare that you will not enter into any negotiations or relations with the German capitalists and with those who abet them directly or indirectly or are involved with them, and that you refuse to speak with the French and British capitalists, then you would be acting to condemn them in the eyes of the workers. You would not regard it as a victory that a passport has been issued to MacDonald,<sup>84</sup> a man who has never waged a revolutionary struggle against capital and who is being allowed to come because he has never expressed the ideas, principles, practice or experience of the revolutionary struggle against the British capitalists, a struggle for which our Comrade MacLean and hundreds of other British socialists are in prison, and for which our Comrade Liebknecht is confined to a convict prison because he said, "German soldiers, fire on your Kaiser!"

Wouldn't it be more proper to consign the imperialist capitalists to that penal servitude which most of the Provisional Government members in an expressly reconstituted Third Duma—I don't know, incidentally, whether it is the Third or the Fourth Duma—are daily preparing for us and promising us and about which the Ministry of Justice is already drafting new Bills? MacLean and Liebknecht—those are the names of socialists who are putting the idea of a revolutionary struggle against imperialism into practice. That is what we must say to all governments if we want to fight for peace. We must condemn them before their people. You will then put all the imperialist governments in a difficult position. But now you have complicated your own position by addressing your Peace Manifesto of March 14<sup>85</sup> to the people and saying, "Overthrow your tsars, your kings and your bankers!" while we who possess an organisation unprecedentedly rich in number, experience and material strength, the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, join a bloc with our bankers, institute a coalition, near-socialist government, and draft the kind of reforms that have been drafted in Europe for decades. People there in

Europe laugh at this kind of peace struggle. There they will understand it only when the Soviets take power and act in a revolutionary way.

Only one country in the world can at the moment take steps to stop the imperialist war on a class scale, in the face of the capitalists and without a bloody revolution. Only one country can do it, and that country is Russia. And she will remain the only one as long as the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies exists. The Soviet cannot exist long side by side with the ordinary type of Provisional Government, and will remain what it is only until the offensive is taken. The offensive will be a turning-point in the whole policy of the Russian revolution, that is, it will be a transition from waiting, from paving the way for peace by means of a revolutionary uprising from below, to the resumption of the war. The path that opened up was transition from fraternisation on one front to fraternisation on every front, from spontaneous fraternisation, such as the exchange of a crust of bread with a hungry German worker for a penknife—which is punishable by penal servitude—to conscious fraternisation.

When we take power into our own hands, we shall curb the capitalists, and then the war will *not be the kind* of war that is being waged now, because the nature of a war is determined by what class wages it, not by what is written on paper. You can write on paper anything you like. But as long as the capitalist class has a majority in the government the war will remain an imperialist war no matter what you write, no matter how eloquent you are, no matter how many near-socialist Ministers you have. Everyone knows that, and everyone can see it. And the cases of Albania, Greece and Persia<sup>86</sup> have shown this so clearly and graphically that I am surprised everyone is attacking our written declaration about the offensive,<sup>87</sup> and no one says a word about specific cases! It is easy to promise Bills, but specific measures are being postponed time and again. It is easy to write a declaration about peace without annexations, but the Albanian, Greek and Persian events took place *after* the coalition Ministry was formed. After all, it was *Dyelo Naroda*, not an organ of our Party, but a government organ, a ministerial organ, which said that it is Russian democracy that is being subjected to this humiliation, and that Greece is being strangled. And this very same Milyukov, whom you imagine to be heaven knows who, although he is just an ordinary member of his party—Tereshchenko in no way differs from him—wrote that the pressure exerted on Greece came from Allied diplomats. The war remains an imperialist war, and however much you may desire peace, however sincere your sympathy for the working people and your desire for peace—I am fully convinced that by and large it must be sincere—

you are powerless, because the war can only be ended by taking the revolution further. When the revolution began in Russia, a revolutionary struggle for peace from below also began. If you were to take power into your hands, if power were to pass to the revolutionary organisations to be used for combating the Russian capitalists, then the working people of some countries would believe you and you could propose peace. Then our peace would be ensured at least from two sides, by the two nations who are being bled white and whose cause is hopeless—Germany and France. And if circumstances then obliged us to wage a revolutionary war—no one knows, and we do not rule out the possibility—we should say: "We are not pacifists, we do not renounce war when the revolutionary class is in power and has actually deprived the capitalists of the opportunity to influence things in any way, to exacerbate the economic dislocation which enables them to make hundreds of millions." The revolutionary government would explain to absolutely every nation that every nation must be free, and that just as the German nation must not fight to retain Alsace and Lorraine, so the French nation must not fight for its colonies. For, while France is fighting for her colonies, Russia has Khiva and Bokhara, which are also something like colonies. Then the division of colonies will begin. And how are they to be divided? On what basis? According to strength. But strength has changed. The capitalists are in a situation where their only way out is war. When you take over revolutionary power, you will have a revolutionary way of securing peace, namely, by addressing a revolutionary appeal to all nations and explaining your tactics by your own example. Then the way to peace secured by revolutionary means will be open to you, and you will most probably be able to avert the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. Then you may be certain that the German and French people will declare in your favour. As for the British, American and Japanese capitalists, even if they wanted a war against the revolutionary working class—whose strength will grow tenfold once the capitalists have been curbed and put down and control has passed into the hands of the working class—even if the American, British and Japanese capitalists wanted a war, the chances would be a hundred to one against them being able to wage it. For peace to be ensured, you will only have to declare that you are not pacifists, that you will defend your republic, your workers', proletarian democracy, against the German, French and other capitalists.

That is why we attached such fundamental importance to our declaration about the offensive. The time has come for a radical turn in the whole history of the Russian revolution. When the Russian revolution began it was assisted by the imperialist bour-

geoisie of Britain who imagined Russia to be something like China or India. Yet, side by side with a government in which the landowners and capitalists now have a majority, the Soviets arose, a representative institution unparalleled and unprecedented anywhere in the world in strength, an institution which you are killing by taking part in a coalition Ministry of the bourgeoisie. In reality, the Russian revolution has made the revolutionary struggle from below against the capitalist governments welcome everywhere, in all countries, with three times as much sympathy as before. The question is one of advance or retreat. No one can stand still during a revolution. That is why the offensive is a turn in the Russian revolution, in the political and economic rather than the strategic sense. An offensive now means the continuation of the imperialist slaughter and the death of more hundreds of thousands, of millions of people—objectively, irrespective of the will or awareness of this or that Minister, with the aim of strangling Persia and other weak nations. Power transferred to the revolutionary proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, means a transition to revolutionary struggle for peace in the surest and most painless forms ever known to mankind, a transition to a state of affairs under which the power and victory of the revolutionary workers will be ensured in Russia and throughout the world (*Applause from part of the audience.*)

---

## THE EIGHTEENTH OF JUNE

In one way or another, June 18 will go down as a turning-point in the history of the Russian revolution.

The mutual position of the classes, their correlation in the struggle against each other, their strength, particularly in comparison with the strength of the parties, were all revealed so distinctly, so strikingly, so impressively by last Sunday's demonstration<sup>88</sup> that, whatever the course and pace of further development, the gain in political awareness and clarity has been tremendous.

The demonstration in a few hours scattered to the winds, like a handful of dust, the empty talk about Bolshevik conspirators and showed with the utmost clarity that the vanguard of the working people of Russia, the industrial proletariat of the capital, and the overwhelming majority of the troops support slogans that our Party has always advocated.

The measured step of the battalions of workers and soldiers. Nearly half a million demonstrators. A concerted onslaught. Unity around the slogans, among which overwhelmingly predominated: "All power to the Soviets", "Down with the ten capitalist Ministers", "Neither a separate peace treaty with the Germans nor secret treaties with the Anglo-French capitalists", etc. No one who saw the demonstration has any doubt left about the victory of these slogans among the organised vanguard of Russia's workers and soldiers.

The demonstration of June 18 was a demonstration of the strength and policy of the revolutionary proletariat, which is showing the direction for the revolution and indicating the way out of the impasse. This is the tremendous historical significance of last Sunday's demonstration, and its essential difference from the demonstrations during the funeral of the victims of the revolution and on May Day. Then it was a universal *tribute* to the

revolution's first victory and to its heroes. The people looked back over the first stage of the road to freedom, which they had passed very rapidly and very successfully. May Day was a *holiday* of hopes and aspirations linked with the history of the world labour movement and with its ideal of peace and socialism.

Neither of the two demonstrations was intended to point the *direction* for the revolution's further development, nor could it do so. Neither demonstration put before the people, or raised in the name of the people, specific, definite and urgent questions as to how and in what direction the revolution should proceed.

In this sense, June 18 was the first political demonstration of *action*, an explanation of how the various classes act, how they want to and will act, in order to further the revolution—an explanation not given in a book or newspaper, but on the streets, not through leaders, but through the people.

The bourgeoisie kept out of the way. They refused to participate in that peaceful demonstration of a clear majority of the people, in which there was freedom of party slogans, and the chief aim of which was to protest against counter-revolution. That is natural. The bourgeoisie are the counter-revolution. They hide from the people. They organise real counter-revolutionary conspiracies against the people. The parties now ruling Russia, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, clearly showed themselves on that historic day, June 18, as waverers. Their slogans spoke of wavering, and it was obvious to all that the supporters of their slogans were in a minority. By their slogans and wavering *they* advised the people to remain where they were, to leave everything unchanged for the time being. And the people felt, and they themselves felt, that that was impossible.

Enough of wavering, said the vanguard of the proletariat, the vanguard of Russia's workers and soldiers. Enough of wavering. The policy of trust in the capitalists, in *their* government, in *their* vain attempts at reform, in *their* war, in *their* policy of an offensive, is a hopeless policy. Its collapse is imminent. Its collapse is inevitable. And that collapse will also be the collapse of the ruling parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks. Economic disruption is coming nearer. There is *no* escaping it except by the revolutionary measures of the revolutionary class which has taken power.

Let the people break with the policy of trust in the capitalists. Let them put their trust in the revolutionary class—the proletariat. The source of power lies in it and only in it. It alone is the pledge that the interests of the *majority* will be served, the interests of the working and exploited people, who, though held down by war and capital, are capable of defeating war and capital!



A crisis of unprecedented scale has descended upon Russia and the whole of humanity. The only way out is to put trust in the most organised and advanced contingent of the working and exploited people, and support its policy.

We do not know whether the people will grasp this lesson soon or how they will put it into effect. But we do know for certain that apart from this lesson there is no way out of the impasse, that possible waverings or brutalities on the part of the counter-revolutionaries will lead nowhere.

There is no way out unless the masses put complete confidence in their leader, the proletariat.

*Pravda* No. 86,  
July 3 (June 20), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25,  
pp. 109-11

---

## WHAT COULD THE CADETS HAVE COUNTED ON WHEN THEY WITHDREW FROM THE CABINET?<sup>89</sup>

The question arises quite naturally. To correctly meet events with definite tactics, we must understand them correctly. How, then, are we to understand the Cadet withdrawal?

Spite? Disagreement in principle over the Ukraine? Of course not. It would be ridiculous to suspect the Cadets of loyalty to principles, or the bourgeoisie of the ability to do something out of spite.

The Cadet withdrawal can only be understood as a calculated move. What are their calculations?

To govern a country which has carried out a major revolution and is still in a state of unrest, and to govern it during a world-wide imperialist war, you need the initiative and scope of a truly revolutionary class—massively courageous, historically great, wholeheartedly enthusiastic. Either you suppress this class by force, as the Cadets have been preaching for some time, since May 6 in fact, or you entrust yourself to its leadership. Either you are in alliance with imperialist capital, then you must take the offensive, you must be an obedient servant of capital, you must sell yourself to it, you must throw overboard the utopian ideas of abolishing landed property without compensation (see *Birzhevka* for Lvov's speeches against Chernov's programme); or you are against imperialist capital, then you must immediately propose precise peace terms to all nations, because they have all been exhausted by the war, you must dare to raise, and be able to raise, the banner of world proletarian revolution against capital, and to do so not in words but in deeds, to further the revolution with the greatest determination in Russia herself.

The Cadets are wily businessmen in trade, in finance, in safeguarding capital, as well as in politics. They have correctly taken into account the fact that the situation is *objectively* a revolutionary one. They agree to reforms and enjoy sharing power with

the reformists, the Tseretelis and Chernovs. But reforms will not help. There is *no* way out of the crisis, the war and economic disruption, through reforms.

From their class point of view, from the imperialist exploiters' point of view, the Cadets have calculated correctly. They seem to say: "By withdrawing, we present an ultimatum. We know that at present the Tseretelis and Chernovs do not trust the truly revolutionary class, that at present they do not want to conduct a truly revolutionary policy. Let's frighten them. To be without the Cadets means being without the 'aid' of worldwide Anglo-American capital, means raising the banner of revolution against the latter *as well*. The Tseretelis and Chernovs wouldn't do that, they wouldn't dare! They will give in to us!

"If not, then even if a revolution against capital starts, it will fail and we shall come back."

That is how the Cadets calculate. We repeat: from the point of view of the exploiting class, their calculations are correct.

Were the Tseretelis and Chernovs to take the point of view of the exploited class and not that of the vacillating petty bourgeoisie, they would reply to the Cadets' correct calculations by correct adherence to the revolutionary proletariat's policy.

Written on July 3 (16), 1917

Published in *Proletarskoye Deyelo*  
No 2, July 28 (15) 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol 25,  
pp 151-52

---

## WHERE IS STATE POWER AND WHERE IS COUNTER-REVOLUTION?

This question is usually answered quite simply: there is no counter-revolution at all or we do not know where it is. But we know full well where power is. It is in the hands of the Provisional Government, which is controlled by the Central Executive Committee (C.E.C.) of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies. This is the usual answer.

Yesterday's political crisis,<sup>90</sup> like most types of crises, which tear down everything conventional and shatter all illusions, left in its wake the ruins of the illusions expressed in the usual answers—cited above—to the basic questions of any revolution.

There is a former member of the Second Duma, Alexinsky, whom the *Socialist-Revolutionaries* and *Mensheviks*, the ruling parties in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, *refused* to admit on to the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies *until he rehabilitated himself*, i.e., until he redeemed his honour.

What was the trouble? Why did the Executive Committee publicly and formally deny Alexinsky its confidence, demanding that he redeem his honour, i.e., declaring him dishonest?

It was because Alexinsky had made himself so notorious by libellous statements that he had been branded a slanderer in Paris by journalists of the most diverse parties. Alexinsky did not bother to redeem his honour before the Executive Committee. He preferred to hide himself in Plekhanov's newspaper *Yedinstvo*, appearing first under initials, and then, after he had plucked up courage, under his full name.

On July 4, yesterday afternoon, a few Bolsheviks were warned by friends that Alexinsky had laid before the Petrograd journalists' committee some new malicious libel. Most of those who received the warning ignored it completely, treating Alexinsky and his "work" with disdainful contempt. But one Bolshevik,

Jugashvili (Stalin), a member of the Central Executive Committee, who as a Georgian Social-Democrat had known Comrade Chkheidze for a long time, spoke to the latter at a meeting of the C.E.C. about Alexinsky's new infamous slander campaign.

This happened late at night, but Chkheidze declared that the C.E.C. could not be indifferent to the spreading of libel by people who are afraid of open court and an investigation by the C.E.C. In his own name, as Chairman of the C.E.C., and in the name of Tsereteli, a member of the Provisional Government, Chkheidze immediately *telephoned* all newspaper offices, suggesting that they *refrain from publishing Alexinsky's libel*. Chkheidze told Stalin that most papers had expressed readiness to comply with his request, and that only *Yedinstvo* and *Rech* had "kept silent" for a time (we have not seen *Yedinstvo*, but *Rech* has not printed the libel). As a result, the libel appeared only on the pages of a petty, yellow, and to most intelligent people completely unknown paper, *Zhivoye Slovo*<sup>91</sup> No. 51 (404), whose editor and publisher signs himself A. M. Umansky.

The slanderers will now answer before the court. In this respect things are quite simple.

The absurdity of the libel is striking: a certain ensign of the Sixteenth Siberian Rifle Regiment by the name of Yermolenko was "dispatched" (?) "on April 25 to us behind the front lines of the Sixth Army to agitate for the speediest conclusion of a separate peace treaty with Germany". Apparently, he is the escaped prisoner of whom the "document" published in *Zhivoye Slovo* says: "This commission was accepted by Yermolenko on the insistence of the comrades"!!

From this alone you can judge how little faith can be put in an individual who is dishonourable enough to accept such a "commission"! . . . The witness has no sense of honour. This is a fact.

And what was the witness's testimony?

He testified the following: "Officers of the German General Staff, Schiditzki and Lübers, had told him that propaganda of a similar kind was being carried on in Russia by A. Skoropis-Yoltukhovsky, chairman of the Ukrainian section of the Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine,<sup>92</sup> and an agent of the German General Staff, and by Lenin. Lenin was commissioned to do all he could to undermine the confidence of the Russian people in the Provisional Government."

Thus the German officers, in order to induce Yermolenko to commit this dishonourable act, shamelessly lied to him about Lenin who, as everybody knows and as is officially stated by the *entire Bolshevik Party*, has always *rejected* most emphatically, consistently, and unconditionally a separate peace treaty with

Germany!! The lie of the German officers is so obvious, crude and preposterous that no literate person would even for a moment take it for anything but a lie. And a politically literate person would be even more certain that to associate Lenin with an individual like Yoltukhovsky (?) and with the Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine is particularly preposterous, for both Lenin and all other internationalists have repeatedly *dissociated themselves publicly* from this dubious social-patriotic "Union" during the war!

The crude lie told by Yermolenko, whom the Germans had bribed, or by German officers, would not deserve the slightest attention, were it not that the "document" has added what it calls "fresh information"—it is not known by whom, from whom, how, or when received—according to which "money for propaganda is being received" (by whom? the "document" *is afraid* to say plainly that the accused or suspected is Lenin!! The document says nothing about *who* "is receiving it") "through trusted people": the "Bolsheviks" Fürstenberg (Hanecki) and Kozlovsky. It is alleged that there is information proving the transfer of money through banks, and that "the military censorship has discovered a continuous (!) exchange of telegrams of a political and financial nature between German agents and Bolshevik leaders"!!

Again such a crude lie that it sticks out like a sore thumb. If there were even a word of truth in that, then how could it happen (1) that Hanecki had *quite recently* been allowed freely to enter Russia and permitted to leave her just as freely? (2) that *neither* Hanecki *nor* Kozlovsky had been arrested *before* the appearance in the press of information concerning their crimes? Is it really possible that the General Staff, had it actually been in possession of even remotely trustworthy information about the sending of money, telegrams, etc., would have permitted the publication of rumours about this through the Alexinskys and the yellow press, without arresting Hanecki and Kozlovsky? Isn't it clear this is nothing but the cheap work of newspaper slanderers of the lowest order?

We may add that Hanecki and Kozlovsky are not Bolsheviks, but members of the Polish Social-Democratic Party; that we have known Hanecki, a member of its Central Committee, since the 1903 London Congress<sup>93</sup> from which the Polish delegates withdrew, and so on. The Bolsheviks *never* received *any* money from either Hanecki or Kozlovsky. All that is a lie, a complete, vulgar lie.

What is its political significance? First, it indicates that the Bolsheviks' political opponents are so low and contemptible that they cannot get along without lies and libel.

Secondly, it provides us with an answer to the title question of this article.

The report about the "documents" was sent to Kerensky as early as May 16. Kerensky is a member of the Provisional Government and the Soviet, i.e., of both "powers". May 16 to July 5 is a long time. The power, if it really were a power, could and should *itself* have investigated those "documents", interrogated the witnesses, and arrested the suspects. The power, *both* "powers"—the Provisional Government and the C.E.C.—could and should have done this.

Yet both powers are inactive, while the General Staff is found to have some sort of relations with Alexinsky, who was not admitted to the Soviet's Executive Committee owing to his libellous activities! The General Staff, at the very moment of the Cadets' withdrawal, permits—probably by accident—the handing over of its official documents to Alexinsky for publication!

The power is inactive. Neither Kerensky, nor the Provisional Government, nor the C.E.C. so much as think of arresting Lenin, Hanecki, or Kozlovsky, if they are under suspicion. Last night, July 4, both Chkheidze and Tsereteli asked the newspapers not to print the obvious libel. But just a little later, late at night, Polovtsev sent military cadets and Cossacks to wreck *Pravda's* offices, stop the paper's publication, arrest its publishers, seize its ledgers (on the pretext of investigating whether or not suspicious funds were involved). At the same time that yellow, base, filthy little rag, *Zhivoye Slovo*, printed foul libel to arouse passions, revile the Bolsheviks, create an atmosphere of mob violence, and afford a plausible justification for the behaviour of Polovtsev, the military cadets and the Cossacks who had wrecked *Pravda's* offices.

Whoever does not close his eyes to the truth cannot remain deluded. When it is *necessary* to act, *both* powers remain inactive—the C.E.C., because it "trusts" the Cadets and is afraid of irritating them, and the Cadets, who do not act as a power because they prefer to act *behind the scenes*.

Counter-revolution behind the scenes—this is it, as clear as day: the Cadets, certain quarters of the General Staff ("high-ranking officers", as our Party's resolution calls them), and the shady, semi-Black Hundred press. These are *not* inactive, these "work" together hand in glove; this is the soil in which pogroms, attempted pogroms, the shooting of demonstrators, etc., etc., are nurtured.

Whoever does not deliberately shut his eyes to the truth cannot remain deluded any longer.

There is no power, and there will be none until the transfer of power to the Soviets lays the foundation for creating power.

Counter-revolution thrives on the absence of authority by uniting the Cadets with certain high-ranking officers and with the Black Hundred<sup>94</sup> press. This is a sad reality, but a reality nevertheless.

Workers and soldiers! You must show firmness, determination and vigilance!

Written on July 5 (18), 1917

Published in *Listok "Pravdy"*,  
July 19 (6), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25,  
p. 155-59



---

## THREE CRISES

The more violent the slander and lies against the Bolsheviks these days, the more calmly must we, while refuting the lies and slander, reflect upon the historical interrelation of events and the political, i.e., *class*, significance of the revolution's present course.

To refute the lies and slander, we only have to refer again to *Listok "Pravdy"*<sup>95</sup> of July 6, and to call the reader's attention especially to the article printed below which gives documentary evidence that on July 2 the Bolsheviks campaigned *against* the demonstration (as admitted by the Socialist-Revolutionaries' paper). The article indicates that on July 3 the popular mood exploded into action and the demonstration started against our advice. It shows that on July 4, in a leaflet (reprinted by the Socialist-Revolutionary paper *Dyelo Naroda*), we called for a *peaceful* and *organised* demonstration, that on the night of July 4 we passed a decision to call off the demonstration. Slanderers, continue your slander! You can never refute these facts and their decisive significance in every connection!

Let us turn to the question of the historical interrelation of the events. When, as early as the beginning of April, we opposed support for the Provisional Government, we were attacked by both the S.R.s and the Mensheviks. But what has reality proved?

What have the three political crises proved—April 20 and 21,<sup>96</sup> June 10 and 18, July 3 and 4?

They have proved, in the first place, that the masses are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the bourgeois policy of the Provisional Government's bourgeois majority.

It is rather interesting to note that the ruling Socialist-Revolutionaries' newspaper, *Dyelo Naroda*, despite its marked hostility to the Bolsheviks, is compelled to admit, in its July 6 issue, the deep economic and political causes of the action of July 3

and 4. The stupid, crude, infamous lie that this action was artificially created, that the Bolsheviks campaigned *in favour* of action, will daily be more and more exposed.

The common cause, the common origin, the deep common root of the three above-mentioned political crises is clear, especially if we look at them in their interrelation, as science demands that politics be looked at. It is absurd even to think that three such crises could be produced artificially.

In the second place, it is instructive to grasp what each one of them had in common with the others, and what was its specific features.

What is common to all three is a mass dissatisfaction overflowing all bounds, a mass resentment with the bourgeoisie and *their* government. Whoever forgets, ignores or underestimates *this essence of the matter*, renounces the ABC of socialism concerning the class struggle.

Let those who call themselves socialists, who know something about the character of the class struggle in European revolutions, think about the class struggle in the Russian revolution.

These crises are peculiar in the ways they manifested themselves. The first (April 20-21) was stormy and spontaneous, and completely unorganised. It led to Black Hundreds firing on the demonstrators and to unprecedentedly savage and lying accusations against the Bolsheviks. After the outburst came a political crisis.

In the second case, the demonstration was called by the Bolsheviks, and was cancelled after a stern ultimatum and direct ban by the Congress of Soviets; then, on June 18, came a general demonstration in which the Bolshevik slogans clearly predominated. As the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks themselves admitted on the evening of June 18, a political crisis would certainly have broken out had it not been for the offensive at the front.

The third crisis broke out spontaneously on July 3 despite the Bolsheviks' efforts on July 2 to check it. Reaching its climax on July 4, it led to a furious outburst of counter-revolution on July 5 and 6. The vacillation of the S.R.s and Mensheviks expressed itself in Spiridonova and a number of other S.R.s declaring for the transfer of power to the Soviets, and in the Menshevik internationalists, previously opposed to it, voicing the same idea.

The last, and perhaps the most instructive, conclusion to be drawn from considering the events in their interconnection is that *all* three crises manifested some form of demonstration that is new in the history of our revolution, a demonstration of a more complicated type in which the movement proceeds in waves,

a sudden drop following a rapid rise, revolution and counter-revolution becoming more acute, and the middle elements being eliminated for a more or less extensive period.

In all three crises, the movement took the form of a *demonstration*. An anti-government demonstration—that would be the most exact, formal description of events. But the fact of the matter is that it was not an ordinary demonstration; it was something considerably more than a demonstration, but less than a revolution. It was an outburst of revolution and counter-revolution *together*, a sharp, sometimes almost sudden elimination of the middle elements, while the proletarian and bourgeois elements made a stormy appearance.

In this respect it is extremely typical that, for *each* of these movements, the middle elements blame *both* of the specific class forces—the proletariat as well as the bourgeoisie. Look at the S.R.s and Mensheviks. They lean over backwards to frantically shout that, by their extremes, the Bolsheviks are helping the counter-revolution. At the same time, however, they admit again and again that the Cadets (with whom they form a bloc in the government) are counter-revolutionary. "Our urgent task is to draw a line," wrote *Dyelo Naroda* yesterday, "to dig a deep moat between ourselves and all the Right elements, including *Yedinstvo*, which has gone militant" (with which, we may add, the S.R.s formed a bloc during the elections).

Compare that with today's (July 7) issue of *Yedinstvo*, in which Plekhanov's editorial is compelled to state the indisputable fact that the Soviets (i.e., the S.R.s and Mensheviks) will "think over the matter for a fortnight" and that, if power were to pass to the Soviets, "it would be tantamount to victory for Lenin's supporters". "If the Cadets don't stick to the rule—the worse, the better..." says Plekhanov, "they themselves will have to admit that they have made a big mistake [by withdrawing from the Cabinet], making the work of Lenin's supporters easier."

Isn't that typical? The middle elements blame the Cadets for making the Bolsheviks' work easier, and the Bolsheviks for making the Cadets' work easier! Is it so hard to guess that if we substitute class names for political ones we have before us the dreams of the petty bourgeoisie about the disappearance of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? Isn't the petty bourgeoisie complaining about the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? Is it really so hard to guess that no Bolsheviks in the world could have "created" even a single "popular movement", let alone three movements, if the deepest economic and political causes had not set the proletariat into action? Is it so difficult to guess that no Cadets and

monarchists combined could have called forth any movement "from the Right" if it had not been for the equally deep causes that make the bourgeoisie as a class counter-revolutionary?

Both we and the Cadets were blamed for the April 20-21 movement—for intransigence, extremes, and for aggravating the situation. The Bolsheviks were even accused (absurd as it may be) of the firing on Nevsky. When the movement was over, however, those same S.R.s and Mensheviks, in their joint, official organ, *Izvestia*, wrote that the "popular movement" had "swept away the imperialists, Milyukov, etc.", i.e., they *praised* the movement!! Isn't that typical? Doesn't it show very clearly that the petty bourgeoisie do not understand the workings, the meaning, of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie?

The objective situation is this. The vast majority of the country's population is petty-bourgeois by its living conditions and more so by its ideas. But big capital rules the country, primarily through banks and syndicates. There is an urban proletariat in this country, mature enough to go its own way, but not yet able to draw at once the majority of the semi-proletarians to its side. From this fundamental, class, fact follows the inevitability of such crises as the three we are now examining, as well as their forms.

In future the forms of crises may, of course, change, but the substance of the issue will remain the same even if, for instance, the S.R. Constituent Assembly meets in October. The S.R.s have promised the peasants: (1) to abolish private landownership; (2) to transfer the land to the working people; (3) to confiscate the landed estates and transfer them to the peasants without compensation. These great reforms can never be realised without the most decisive revolutionary measures against the bourgeoisie, measures that can *only* be taken when the poor peasants join the proletariat, *only* when the banks and syndicates are nationalised.

The credulous peasants, believing for a time that these beautiful things can be achieved by compromising with the bourgeoisie, will inevitably be disappointed and . . . "dissatisfied" (mildly speaking) with the sharp class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for the implementation of the promises of the S.R.s. So it was, and so it will be.

Written on July 7(20), 1917

Published in the magazine *Rabotnitsa* No 7,  
July 19, 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol 25,  
pp 169 73

---

## THE QUESTION OF THE BOLSHEVIK LEADERS APPEARING IN COURT<sup>97</sup>

Judging by private conversations, there are two opinions on this question.

Comrades succumbing to the "Soviet atmosphere" often incline towards appearing in court.

Those closer to the workers apparently incline towards not appearing.

In principle, the question chiefly boils down to an estimation of what is usually called constitutional illusions.

Anyone who thinks that a regular government and a regular court exist or can exist in Russia, that a Constituent Assembly is likely to be called, may arrive at a conclusion in favour of appearing.

That idea is completely erroneous, however. It is the latest events, after July 4, that have most vividly shown that a Constituent Assembly is unlikely to be called (without a new revolution), that neither a regular government nor a regular court exists or can exist in Russia (at present).

The court is an organ of power. The liberals sometimes forget this, but it is a sin for a Marxist to do so.

Where, then, is the power? Who constitutes the power?

There is no government. It changes daily. It is inactive.

The power that *is* active is the military dictatorship. Under these conditions, it is ridiculous even to speak of "the courts". It is not a question of "courts", but of *an episode in the civil war*. This is what those in favour of appearing in court unfortunately do not want to understand.

Pereverzev and Alexinsky as initiators of the "case"!! Isn't it ridiculous to speak of courts in such circumstances? Isn't it naïve to think that, in such conditions, any court can examine, investigate and establish anything??

Power is in the hands of a military dictatorship. Without a new revolution, this power can only become stronger for a certain time, primarily for the duration of the war.

"I've done nothing against the law. The courts are just. They will sort things out. The trial will be public. The people will understand. I shall appear."

This reasoning is childishly naïve. *The authorities need* not a trial but a persecution campaign against the internationalists. What Kerensky and Co. need is to put them in gaol and keep them there. So it was (in Britain and France), and so it will be (in Russia).

Let the internationalists work illegally as much as they can, but let them not commit the folly of appearing in court of their own free will!

Written on July 8 (21), 1917

First published in the magazine  
*Proletarskaya Revolyutsia* No. 1,  
1925

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25  
pp. 174-75

---

## THE POLITICAL SITUATION

(FOUR THESES)

The counter-revolution has become organised and consolidated, and has actually taken state power into its hands.

The complete organisation and consolidation of the counter-revolution consists in a combination of its three main forces, a combination excellently conceived and already put into practice:

1. The Constitutional-Democratic Party, i.e., the real leader of the organised bourgeoisie, has, by withdrawing from the Cabinet, confronted it with an ultimatum, thus clearing the way for the Cabinet's overthrow by the counter-revolution.

2. The General Staff and the military leaders, with the deliberate or semi-deliberate assistance of Kerensky, whom even the most prominent Socialist-Revolutionaries now call a Cavaignac, have seized actual state power and have proceeded to shoot down revolutionary units at the front, disarm the revolutionary troops and workers in Petrograd and Moscow, suppress unrest in Nizhni-Novgorod, arrest Bolsheviks and ban their papers, not only without trial, but even without a government order. At present, basic state power in Russia is virtually a military dictatorship. This fact is still obscured by a number of institutions that are revolutionary in words but powerless in deeds. Yet it is so obvious and fundamental a fact that without understanding it, one cannot understand anything about the political situation.

3. The Black Hundred-monarchist and bourgeois press, which has switched from hounding Bolsheviks to hounding the Soviets, the "incendiary" Chernov, etc., has indicated with the utmost clarity that the true meaning of the policy of military dictatorship, which now reigns supreme and is supported by the Cadets and monarchists, is preparations for disbanding the Soviets. Many of the leaders of the S.R.s and Mensheviks, i.e., the present majority in the Soviets, have admitted and expressed this during the past few days, but, true to their petty-bourgeois nature.

they shrug off this formidable reality with meaningless high-sounding phrases.

The leaders of the Soviets and of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, headed by Tsereteli and Chernov, have completely betrayed the cause of the revolution by putting it in the hands of the counter-revolutionaries and by turning themselves, their parties and the Soviets into mere fig-leaves of the counter-revolution.

Proof of this is that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the Bolsheviks and have tacitly agreed to close down their papers without daring to tell the people plainly and openly that they are doing so and why. By sanctioning the disarming of the workers and the revolutionary regiments, they have deprived themselves of all real power. They have turned into the most loud-mouthed ranters who help the reaction to "divert" the people's attention until it is finally ready to disband the Soviets. It is impossible to understand anything at all about the present political situation without realising this complete and final bankruptcy of the S.R.s and Mensheviks and the present majority in the Soviets and without realising that their "Directory" and other masquerades are an absolute sham.

All hopes for a peaceful development of the Russian revolution have vanished for good. This is the objective situation: either complete victory for the military dictatorship, or victory for the workers' armed uprising; the latter victory is only possible when the insurrection coincides with a deep, mass upheaval against the government and the bourgeoisie caused by economic disruption and the prolongation of the war.

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" was a slogan for peaceful development of the revolution which was possible in April, May, June, and up to July 5-9, i.e., up to the time when actual power passed into the hands of the military dictatorship. This slogan is no longer correct, for it does not take into account that power has changed hands and that the revolution has in fact been completely betrayed by the S.R.s and Mensheviks. Reckless actions, revolts, partial resistance, or hopeless hit-and-run attempts to oppose reaction will not help. What will help is a clear understanding of the situation, endurance and determination of the workers' vanguard, preparation of forces for the armed uprising, for the victory of which conditions at present are extremely difficult, but still possible if the facts and trends mentioned above coincide. Let us have no constitutional or republican illusions of any kind, no more illusions about a peaceful path, no sporadic actions, no yielding *now* to provocation from the Black Hundreds and Cossacks. Let us gather forces, reorganise them, and resolutely prepare for the armed uprising, if the course of the crisis



permits it on a really mass, country-wide scale. The transfer of land to the peasants is impossible at present without armed uprising, since the counter-revolutionaries, having taken power, have completely united with the landowners as a class.

The aim of the insurrection can only be to transfer power to the proletariat, supported by the poor peasants, with a view to putting our Party programme into effect.

4. The party of the working class, without abandoning legal activity, but never for a moment overrating it, must *combine* legal with illegal work, as it did in 1912-14.

Don't let slip a single hour of legal work. But don't cherish any constitutional or "peaceful" illusions. Form illegal organisations or cells everywhere and at once for the publication of leaflets, etc. Reorganise immediately, consistently, resolutely, all along the line.

Act as we did in 1912-14, when we could speak about overthrowing tsarism by a revolution and an armed uprising, without at the same time losing our legal base in the Duma, the insurance societies, the trade unions, etc.

Written on July 10 (23), 1917

Published on August 2 (July 20), 1917  
in *Proletarskoye Dyelo* No 6  
Signed *W.*

*Collected Works*, Vol 25,  
pp 176-78

---

## LETTER TO THE EDITORS OF *PROLETARSKOYE DYELO*<sup>88</sup>

Comrades,

We have changed our minds about submitting to the Provisional Government's decree ordering our arrests, for the following reasons.

From the letter of Pereverzev, the former Minister of Justice, published on Sunday in *Novoye Uremya*,<sup>99</sup> it became perfectly clear that the "espionage" "case" of Lenin and others was quite deliberately framed by the party of the counter-revolution.

Pereverzev has openly admitted that he took advantage of unconfirmed accusations to work up (his actual expression) the soldiers against our Party. This is admitted by the former Minister of Justice, a man who only, yesterday called himself a socialist! Pereverzev is gone, but whether the new Minister of Justice will hesitate to adopt Pereverzev's and Alexinsky's methods, nobody can venture to say.

The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie are trying to create a new Dreyfus case.<sup>100</sup> They believe in our "espionage" as much as the leaders of Russian reaction, who framed the Beilis case,<sup>101</sup> believed that Jews drink children's blood. There are no guarantees of justice in Russia at present.

The Central Executive Committee, which considers itself the plenipotentiary organ of the Russian democrats, appointed a commission to investigate the espionage charges, but under pressure from the counter-revolutionary forces dismissed it. The Central Executive Committee refused to either directly confirm or to revoke the warrant for our arrest. It washed its hands of the case, virtually delivering us to the counter-revolution.

The charges of "conspiracy" and "moral incitement" to revolt preferred against us are of a very definite nature, but no precise indictment of our alleged crime is brought either by the Provisional Government or by the Soviet, both of which know

full well that it is sheer nonsense to speak of "conspiracy" in referring to a movement like that of July 3-5. The Menshevik and S.R. leaders are simply trying to appease the counter-revolution that is already bearing down on them too, by delivering a number of our Party members to the counter-revolutionaries in compliance with their demand. At present there can be no legal basis in Russia, not even such constitutional guarantees as exist in the orderly bourgeois countries. To give ourselves up at present to the authorities would mean putting ourselves into the hands of the Milyukovs, Alexinskys, Pereverzevs, of rampant counter-revolutionaries who look upon all the charges against us as a simple civil war episode.

After what happened on July 6-8, not a single Russian revolutionary can harbour constitutional illusions any longer. Revolution and counter-revolution are coming to grips in a decisive fashion. We shall continue to fight on the side of the former.

We shall continue to aid the proletariat's revolutionary struggle as far as we can. The Constituent Assembly alone, if it meets, and if its convocation is not the handiwork of the bourgeoisie, will have full authority to pass judgement upon the Provisional Government's decree ordering our arrest.

*N. Lenin*

---

## ON SLOGANS

Too often has it happened that, when history has taken a sharp turn, even progressive parties have for some time been unable to adapt themselves to the new situation and have repeated slogans which had formerly been correct but had now lost all meaning—lost it as “suddenly” as the sharp turn in history was “sudden”.

Something of the sort seems likely to recur in connection with the slogan calling for the transfer of all state power to the Soviets. That slogan was correct during a period of our revolution—say, from February 27 to July 4—that has now passed irrevocably. It has patently ceased to be correct now. Unless this is understood, it is impossible to understand anything of the urgent questions of the day. Every particular slogan must be deduced from the totality of specific features of a definite political situation. And the political situation in Russia now, after July 4, differs radically from the situation between February 27 and July 4.

During that period of the revolution now past, the so-called “dual power” existed in the country, which both materially and formally expressed the indefinite and transitional condition of state power. Let us not forget that the issue of power is the fundamental issue of every revolution.

At that time state power was unstable. It was shared, by voluntary agreement, between the Provisional Government and the Soviets. The Soviets were delegations from the mass of free—i.e., not subject to external coercion—and armed workers and soldiers. What *really mattered* was that arms were in the hands of the people and that there was no coercion of the people from without. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the progress of the revolution. The slogan “All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets” was a slogan for the next step,

the immediately feasible step, on that peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for the peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible and, of course, most desirable between February 27 and July 4 but which is now absolutely impossible.

Apparently, not all the supporters of the slogan "All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets" have given adequate thought to the fact that it was a slogan for peaceful progress of the revolution—peaceful not only in the sense that nobody, no class, no force of any importance, would then (between February 27 and July 4) have been able to resist and prevent the transfer of power to the Soviets. That is not all. Peaceful development would then have been possible, even in the sense that the struggle of classes and parties *within* the Soviets could have assumed a most peaceful and painless form, provided full state power had passed to the Soviets in good time.

The latter aspect of the matter has similarly not yet received adequate attention. In their class composition, the Soviets were organs of the movement of the workers and peasants, a ready-made form of their dictatorship. Had they possessed full state power, the main shortcoming of the petty-bourgeois groups, their chief sin, that of trusting the capitalists, really would have been overcome, would have been criticised by the experience of their own measures. The change of classes and parties in power could have proceeded peacefully within the Soviets, provided the latter wielded exclusive and undivided power. The contact between all the Soviet parties and the people could have remained stable and unimpaired. One must not forget for a single moment that only such a close contact between the Soviet parties and the people, freely growing in extent and depth, could have helped peacefully to get rid of the illusion of petty-bourgeois compromise with the bourgeoisie. The transfer of power to the Soviets would not, and could not, in itself have changed the correlation of classes; it would in no way have changed the petty-bourgeois nature of the peasants. But it would have taken a big and timely step towards separating the peasants from the bourgeoisie, towards bringing them closer to, and then uniting them with, the workers.

This is what might have happened had power passed to the Soviets at the proper time. That would have been the easiest and the most advantageous course for the people. This course would have been the least painful, and it was therefore necessary to fight for it most energetically. Now, however, this struggle, the struggle for the timely transfer of power to the Soviets, has ended. A peaceful course of development has become impossible. A non-peaceful and most painful course has begun.

The turning-point of July 4 was precisely a drastic change in the objective situation. The unstable condition of state power has

come to an end. At the decisive point, power has passed into the hands of the counter-revolution. The development of the parties on the basis of the collaboration of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties and the counter-revolutionary Cadets has brought about a situation in which both these petty-bourgeois parties have virtually become participants in and abettors of counter-revolutionary butchery. As the struggle between parties developed, the unreasoning trust which the petty bourgeoisie put in the capitalists led to their deliberate support of the counter-revolutionaries. The development of party relations has completed its cycle. On February 27, all classes found themselves united against the monarchy. After July 4, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, working hand in glove with the monarchists and the Black Hundreds, secured the support of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, partly by intimidating them, and handed over real state power to the Cavaignacs, the military gang, who are shooting insubordinate soldiers at the front and smashing the Bolsheviks in Petrograd.

The slogan calling for the transfer of state power to the Soviets would now sound quixotic or mocking. Objectively it would be deceiving the people; it would be fostering in them the delusion that even *now* it is enough for the Soviets to want to take power, or to pass such a decision, for power to be theirs, that there are still parties in the Soviets which have not been tainted by abetting the butchers, that it is possible to undo what has been done.

It would be a profound error to think that the revolutionary proletariat is capable of "refusing" to support the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against the counter-revolution by way of "revenge", so to speak, for the support they gave in smashing the Bolsheviks, in shooting down soldiers at the front and in disarming the workers. First, this would be applying philistine conceptions of morality to the proletariat (since, *for the good of the cause*, the proletariat will always support not only the vacillating petty bourgeoisie but even the big bourgeoisie); secondly—and that is the important thing—it would be a philistine attempt to obscure the political substance of the situation by "moralising".

And the political substance is that power can no longer be taken peacefully. It can be obtained only by winning a decisive struggle against those actually in power at the moment, namely, the military gang, the Cavaignacs, who are relying for support on the reactionary troops brought to Petrograd and on the Cadets and monarchists.

The substance of the situation is that these new holders of state power can be defeated only by the revolutionary masses, who,

to be brought into motion, must not only be led by the proletariat, but must also turn their backs on the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, which have betrayed the cause of the revolution.

Those who introduce philistine morals into politics reason as follows: let us assume that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did commit an "error" in supporting the Cavaignacs, who are disarming the proletariat and the revolutionary regiments; still, they must be given a chance to "rectify" their "error"; the rectification of the "error" "should not be made difficult" for them; the swing of the petty bourgeoisie towards the workers should be facilitated. Such reasoning would be childishly naïve or simply stupid, if not a new deception of the workers. For the swing of the petty-bourgeois masses towards the workers would mean, and could only mean, that these masses had turned their backs upon the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties could now rectify their "error" only by denouncing Tsereteli, Chernov, Dan and Rakitnikov as the butchers' aides. We are wholly and unconditionally in favour of their "error" being "rectified" in this way. . . .

We said that the fundamental issue of revolution is the issue of power. We must add that it is revolutions that show us at every step how the question of *where* actual power lies is obscured, and reveal the divergence between formal and real power. That is one of the chief characteristics of every revolutionary period. It was not clear in March and April 1917 whether real power was in the hands of the government or the Soviet.

Now, however, it is particularly important for class-conscious workers to soberly face the fundamental issue of revolution, namely, who holds state power at the moment? Consider its material manifestations, do not mistake words for deeds, and you will have no difficulty in finding the answer.

Frederick Engels once wrote the state is primarily contingents of armed men with material adjuncts, such as prisons.<sup>102</sup> Now it is the military cadets<sup>103</sup> and the reactionary Cossacks, who have been specially brought to Petrograd, those who are keeping Kamenev and the others in prison, who closed down *Pravda*, who disarmed the workers and a certain section of the soldiers, who are shooting down an equally certain section of the soldiers, who are shooting down an equally certain section of troops in the army. These butchers are the real power. The Tseretelis and Chernovs are ministers without power, puppet ministers, leaders of parties that support the butchery. That is a fact. And the fact is no less true because Tsereteli and Chernov themselves probably "do not approve" of the butchery, or because their papers timidly

dissociate themselves from it. Such changes of political garb change nothing in substance.

The newspaper of 150,000 Petrograd voters has been closed down. The military cadets on July 6 killed the worker Voinov for carrying *Listok "Pravdy"* out of the printers'. Isn't that butchery? Isn't that the handiwork of Cavaignacs? But neither the government nor the Soviets are to "blame" for this, they may tell us.

So much the worse for the government and the Soviets, we reply; for that means that they are mere figureheads, puppets, and that real power is not in their hands.

Primarily, and above all, the people must know the *truth*—they must know who actually wields state power. The people must be told the whole truth, namely, that power is in the hands of a military clique of Cavaignacs (Kerensky, certain generals, officers, etc.), who are supported by the bourgeois class headed by the Cadet Party, and by all the monarchists, acting through the Black Hundred papers, *Novoye Uremya*, *Zhivoye Slovo*, etc., etc.

That power must be overthrown. Unless this is done, all talk of fighting the counter-revolution is so much phrase-mongering, "self-deception and deception of the people".

That power now has the support both of the Tseretelis and Chernovs in the Cabinet and of their parties. We must explain to the people the butcher's role they are playing and the fact that such a "finale" for these parties was inevitable after their "errors" of April 21, May 5, June 9<sup>14</sup> and July 4 and after their approval of the policy of an offensive, a policy which went nine-tenths of the way to predetermining the victory of the Cavaignacs in July.

All agitational work among the people must be reorganised to ensure that it takes account of the specific experience of the present revolution, and particularly of the July days, i.e., that it clearly points to the real enemy of the people, the military clique, the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, and that it definitely unmasks the petty-bourgeois parties, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, which played and are playing the part of butcher's aides.

All agitational work among the people must be reorganised so as to make clear that it is absolutely hopeless to expect the peasants to obtain land as long as the power of the military clique has not been overthrown, and as long as the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties have not been exposed and deprived of the people's trust. That would be a very long and arduous process under the "normal" conditions of capitalist development, but both the war and economic disruption will tremen-



dously accelerate it. These are "accelerators" that may make a month or even a week equal to a year.

Two objections may perhaps be advanced against what has been said above: first, that to speak now of a decisive struggle is to encourage sporadic action, which would only benefit the counter-revolutionaries; second, that their overthrow would still mean transferring power to the Soviets.

In answer to the first objection, we say: the workers of Russia are already class-conscious enough not to yield to provocation at a moment which is obviously unfavourable to them. It is indisputable that for them to take action and offer resistance at the moment would mean aiding the counter-revolutionaries. It is also indisputable that a decisive struggle will be possible only in the event of a new revolutionary upsurge in the very depths of the masses. But it is not enough to speak in general terms of a revolutionary upsurge, of the rising tide of revolution, of aid by the West-European workers, and so forth; we must draw a definite conclusion from our past, from the lessons we have been given. And that will lead us to the slogan of a decisive struggle against the counter-revolutionaries, who have seized power.

The second objection also amounts to a substitution of arguments of too general a character for concrete realities. No one, no force, can overthrow the bourgeois counter-revolutionaries except the revolutionary proletariat. Now, after the experience of July 1917, it is the revolutionary proletariat that must independently take over state power. Without that the victory of the revolution is *impossible*. The only solution is for power to be in the hands of the proletariat, and for the latter to be supported by the poor peasants or semi-proletarians. And we have already indicated the factors that can enormously accelerate this solution.

Soviets may appear in this new revolution, and indeed are bound to, but *not* the present Soviets, not organs collaborating with the bourgeoisie, but organs of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. It is true that even then we shall be in favour of building the whole state on the model of the Soviets. It is not a question of Soviets in general, but of combating the *present* counter-revolution and the treachery of the *present* Soviets.

The substitution of the abstract for the concrete is one of the greatest and most dangerous sins in a revolution. The present Soviets have failed, have suffered complete defeat, because they are dominated by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. At the moment these Soviets are like sheep brought to the slaughterhouse and bleating pitifully under the knife. The Soviets *at present* are powerless and helpless against the triumphant and triumphing counter-revolution. The slogan calling for the transfer of power to the Soviets might be construed as a

“simple” appeal for the transfer of power to the present Soviets, and to say that, to appeal for it, would now mean deceiving the people. Nothing is more dangerous than deceit.

The cycle of development of the class and party struggle in Russia from February 27 to July 4 is complete. A new cycle is beginning, one that involves not the old classes, not the old parties, not the old Soviets, but classes, parties and Soviets rejuvenated in the fire of struggle, tempered, schooled and refashioned by the process of the struggle. We must look forward, not backward. We must operate not with the old, but with the new, post-July, class and party categories. We must, at the beginning of the new cycle, proceed from the triumphant bourgeois counter-revolution, which triumphed because the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks compromised with it, and which can be defeated only by the revolutionary proletariat. Of course, in this new cycle there will be many and various stages, both before the complete victory of the counter-revolution and the complete defeat (without a struggle) of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and before a new upsurge of a new revolution. But it will only be possible to speak of this later, as each of these stages is reached.

Written in mid July 1917

Published in pamphlet form in 1917  
by the Kronstadt Committee  
of the R S D L P (B)

*Collected Works* Vol 25  
pp 183-90

---

## LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

Every revolution means a sharp turn in the lives of a vast number of people. Unless the time is ripe for such a turn, no real revolution can take place. And just as any turn in the life of an individual teaches him a great deal and brings rich experience and great emotional stress, so a revolution teaches an entire people very rich and valuable lessons in a short space of time.

During a revolution, millions and tens of millions of people learn in a week more than they do in a year of ordinary, somnolent life. For at the time of a sharp turn in the life of an entire people it becomes particularly clear what aims the various classes of the people are pursuing, what strength they possess, and what methods they use.

Every class-conscious worker, soldier and peasant should ponder thoroughly over the lessons of the Russian revolution, especially now, at the end of July, when it is clear that the first phase of our revolution has failed.

### I

Let us see, in fact, what the workers and peasants were striving for when they made the revolution. What did they expect of the revolution? As we know, they expected liberty, peace, bread and land.

But what do we see now?

Instead of liberty, the old tyranny is coming back. The death penalty is being introduced for the soldiers at the front.<sup>105</sup> Peasants are prosecuted for the unauthorised seizure of landed estates. Printing presses of workers' newspapers are wrecked. Workers' newspapers are closed down without trial. Bolsheviks are arrested, often without any charge or upon blatantly trumped-up charges.

It may be argued that the persecution of Bolsheviks does not constitute a violation of freedom, for only certain individuals are being prosecuted and on certain charges. Such an argument, however, would be a deliberate and obvious lie; for how can anyone wreck printing presses and close down newspapers for the crimes of individuals, even if these charges were proved and established by a court of law? It would be a different thing if the government had legally declared the whole party of the Bolsheviks, their very trend and views, to be criminal. But everybody knows that the government of free Russia could not, and did not, do anything of the kind.

What chiefly exposes the libellous character of the charges against the Bolsheviks is that the newspapers of the landowners and capitalists furiously abused the Bolsheviks for their struggle against the war and against the landowners and capitalists, and openly demanded the arrest and prosecution of the Bolsheviks even when not a single charge against a single Bolshevik had been trumped up.

The people want peace. Yet the revolutionary government of free Russia has resumed the war of conquest on the basis of those very same secret treaties which ex-Tsar Nicholas II concluded with the British and French capitalists so that the Russian capitalists might plunder other nations. Those secret treaties remain unpublished. The government of free Russia resorted to subterfuges, and to this day has not proposed a just peace to all nations.

There is no bread. Famine is again drawing near. Everybody sees that the capitalists and the rich are unscrupulously cheating the treasury on war deliveries (the war is now costing the nation fifty million rubles daily), that they are raking in fabulous profits through high prices, while nothing whatsoever has been done to establish effective control by the workers over the production and distribution of goods. The capitalists are becoming more brazen every day; they are throwing workers out into the street, and this at a time when the people are suffering from shortages.

A vast majority of the peasants, at congress after congress, have loudly and clearly declared that landed proprietorship is an injustice and robbery. Meanwhile, a government which calls itself revolutionary and democratic has been leading peasants by the nose for months and deceiving them by promises and delays. For months the capitalists did not allow Minister Chernov to issue a law prohibiting the purchase and sale of land. And when this law was finally passed, the capitalists started a foul slander campaign against Chernov, which they are still continuing. The government has become so brazen in its defence of the landowners that it is beginning to bring peasants to trial for "unauthorised" seizures of land.

They are leading the peasants by the nose, telling them to wait for the Constituent Assembly. The convocation of the Assembly, however, is being steadily postponed by the capitalists. Now that owing to Bolshevik pressure it has been set for September 30, the capitalists are openly clamouring about this being "impossibly" short notice, and are demanding the Constituent Assembly's postponement. The most influential members of the capitalist and landowner party, the "Cadet", or "people's freedom", Party, such as Panina, are openly urging that the convocation of the Constituent Assembly be delayed until after the war.

As to land, wait until the Constituent Assembly. As to the Constituent Assembly, wait until the end of the war. As to the end of the war, wait until complete victory. That is what it comes to. The capitalists and landowners, having a majority in the government, are plainly mocking at the peasants.

## II

But how could this happen in a free country, after the overthrow of the tsarist regime?

In a non-free country, the people are ruled by a tsar and a handful of landowners, capitalists and bureaucrats who are not elected by anybody.

In a free country, the people are ruled only by those who have been elected for that purpose by the people themselves. At the elections the people divide themselves into parties, and as a rule each class of the population forms its own party; for instance, the landowners, the capitalists, the peasants and the workers all form separate parties. In free countries, therefore, the people are ruled through an open struggle between parties and by free agreement between these parties.

For about four months after the overthrow of the tsarist regime on February 27, 1917, Russia was ruled as a free country, i.e., through an open struggle between freely-formed parties and by free agreement between them. To understand the development of the Russian revolution, therefore, it is above all necessary to study the chief parties, the class interests they defended, and the relations among them all.

## III

After the overthrow of the tsarist regime state power passed into the hands of the first Provisional Government, consisting of representatives of the bourgeoisie, i.e., the capitalists, who were joined by the landowners. The "Cadet" Party, the chief

capitalist party, held pride of place as the ruling and government party of the bourgeoisie.

It was no accident this party secured power, although it was not the capitalists, of course, but the workers and peasants, the soldiers and sailors, who fought the tsarist troops and shed their blood for liberty. Power was secured by the capitalist party because the capitalist class possessed the power of wealth, organisation and knowledge. Since 1905, and particularly during the war, the class of the capitalists, and the landowners associated with them, have made in Russia the greatest progress in organising.

The Cadet Party has always been monarchist, both in 1905 and from 1905 to 1917. After the people's victory over tsarist tyranny it proclaimed itself a republican party. The experience of history shows that whenever the people triumphed over a monarchy, capitalist parties were willing to become republican as long as they could uphold the privileges of the capitalists and their unlimited power over the people.

The Cadet Party pays lip-service to "people's freedom". But actually it stands for the capitalists, and it was immediately backed by all the landowners, monarchists and Black Hundreds. The press and the elections are proof of this. After the revolution, all the bourgeois papers and the whole Black Hundred press began to sing in unison with the Cadets. Not daring to come out openly, all the monarchist parties supported the Cadet Party at the elections, as, for example, in Petrograd.

Having obtained state power, the Cadets made every effort to continue the predatory war of conquest begun by Tsar Nicholas II, who had concluded secret predatory treaties with the British and French capitalists. Under these treaties, the Russian capitalists were promised, in the event of victory, the seizure of Constantinople, Galicia, Armenia, etc. As to the people, the government of the Cadets put them off with empty subterfuges and promises, deferring the decision of all matters of vital and essential importance to the workers and peasants until the Constituent Assembly met, without appointing the date of its convocation.

Making use of liberty, the people began to organise independently. The chief organisation of the workers and peasants, who form the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia, was the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. These Soviets already began to be formed during the February Revolution, and within a few weeks all class-conscious and advanced workers and peasants were united in Soviets in most of the larger cities of Russia and in many rural districts.

The Soviets were elected in an absolutely free way. They were genuine organisations of the people, of the workers and peasants. They were genuine organisations of the vast majority of the

people. The workers and peasants in soldiers' uniforms were armed.

It goes without saying that the Soviets could and should have taken over state power in full. Pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly there should have been no other power in the state but the Soviets. Only then would our revolution have become a truly popular and truly democratic revolution. Only then could the working people, who are really striving for peace, and who really have no interest in a war of conquest, have begun firmly and resolutely to carry out a policy which would have ended the war of conquest and led to peace. Only then could the workers and peasants have curbed the capitalists, who are making fabulous profits "from the war" and who have reduced the country to a state of ruin and starvation. But in the Soviets only a minority of the deputies were on the side of the revolutionary workers' party, the Bolshevik Social-Democrats, who demanded that all state power should be transferred to the Soviets. The majority of the deputies to the Soviets were on the side of the parties of the Menshevik Social-Democrats and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who were opposed to the transfer of power to the Soviets. Instead of removing the bourgeois government and replacing it by a government of the Soviets, these parties insisted on supporting the bourgeois government, compromising with it and forming a coalition government with it. This policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie pursued by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, who enjoyed the confidence of the majority of the people, is the main content of the entire course of development of the revolution during the five months since it began.

#### IV

Let us first see how this compromising of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie proceeded, and then let us try to explain why the majority of the people trusted them.

#### V

The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have compromised with the capitalists in one way or another at every stage of the Russian revolution.

At the very close of February 1917, as soon as the people had triumphed and the tsarist regime had been overthrown, the capitalist Provisional Government admitted Kerensky as a "socialist". As a matter of fact, Kerensky has never been a socialist;

he was only a Trudovik, and he enlisted himself with the "Socialist-Revolutionaries" only in March 1917, when it was already safe and quite profitable to do so. Through Kerensky, as Deputy Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, the capitalist Provisional Government immediately set about gaining control of and taming the Soviet. The Soviet, i.e., the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks who predominated in it, allowed itself to be tamed, agreeing immediately after the formation of the capitalist Provisional Government to "support it"—"to the extent" that it carried out its promises.

The Soviet regarded itself as a body verifying and exercising control over the activities of the Provisional Government. The leaders of the Soviet established what was known as a Contact Commission to keep in touch with the government.<sup>106</sup> Within that Contact Commission, the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Soviet held continuous negotiations with the capitalist government, holding, properly speaking, the status of Ministers without portfolio or unofficial Ministers.

This state of affairs lasted throughout March and almost the whole of April. Seeking to gain time, the capitalists resorted to delays and subterfuges. Not a single step of any importance to further the revolution was taken by the capitalist government during this period. It did absolutely nothing even to further its direct and immediate task, the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; it did not submit the question to the localities or even set up a central commission to handle the preparations. The government was concerned with only one thing, namely, surreptitiously renewing the predatory international treaties concluded by the tsar with the capitalists of Britain and France, thwarting the revolution as cautiously and quietly as possible, and promising everything without fulfilling any of its promises. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the Contact Commission acted like simpletons who were fed on fancy phrases, promises, and more promises. Like the crow in the fable, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks succumbed to flattery and listened with pleasure to the assurances of the capitalists that they valued the Soviets highly and did not take a single step without them.

But time passed and the capitalist government did absolutely nothing for the revolution. On the contrary, during this period it managed, to the detriment of the revolution, to renew the secret predatory treaties, or, rather, to reaffirm them and "vitalise" them by supplementary and no less secret negotiations with Anglo-French imperialist diplomats. During this period it managed, to the detriment of the revolution, to lay the foundations of a counter-revolutionary organisation of (or at least of a rapprochement among) the generals and officers in the army in the field. To the



detriment of the revolution it managed to start the organisation of industrialists, of factory-owners, who, under the onslaught of the workers, were compelled to make concession after concession, but who at the same time began to sabotage (damage) production and prepare to bring it to a standstill when the opportunity came.

However, the organisation of the advanced workers and peasants in the Soviets made steady progress. The foremost representatives of the oppressed classes felt that, in spite of the agreement between the government and the Petrograd Soviet, in spite of Kerensky's pompous talk, in spite of the "Contact Commission", the government remained an enemy of the people, an enemy of the revolution. The people felt that unless the resistance of the capitalists was broken, the cause of peace, liberty and the revolution would inevitably be lost. The impatience and bitterness of the people kept on growing.

## VI

It burst out on April 20-21. The movement flared up spontaneously; nobody had cleared the ground for it. The movement was so markedly directed against the government that one regiment even appeared fully armed at the Mariinsky Palace to arrest the ministers. It became perfectly obvious to everybody that the government could not retain power. The Soviets could (and should) have taken over power without meeting the least resistance from any quarter. Instead, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks supported the collapsing capitalist government, entangled themselves even further in compromises with it and took steps that were even more fatal to the revolution, that tended to lead to its doom.

Revolution enlightens all classes with a rapidity and thoroughness unknown in normal, peaceful times. The capitalists, better organised and more experienced than anybody else in matters of class struggle and politics, learnt their lesson quicker than the others. Realising that the government's position was hopeless, they resorted to a method which for many decades, ever since 1848, has been practised by the capitalists of other countries in order to fool, divide and weaken the workers. This method is known as a "coalition" government, i.e., a joint cabinet formed of members of the bourgeoisie and turncoats from socialism.

In countries where freedom and democracy have long existed side by side with a revolutionary labour movement, in Britain and France, the capitalists have repeatedly and very successfully resorted to this method. When the "socialist" leaders entered a

bourgeois cabinet, they invariably proved to be figureheads, puppets, screens for the capitalists, instruments for deceiving the workers. The "democratic and republican" capitalists of Russia resorted to this very method. The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks let themselves be fooled at once, and the "coalition" cabinet, joined by Chernov, Tsereteli and Co., became a fact on May 6.

The simpletons of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties were jubilant and fatuously bathed in the rays of the ministerial glory of their leaders. The capitalists gleefully rubbed their hands at having found helpers against the people in the persons of the "leaders of the Soviets" and at having secured their promise to support "offensive operations at the front", i.e., a resumption of the imperialist predatory war, which had come to a standstill for a while. The capitalists were well aware of the puffed-up impotence of these leaders, they knew that the promises of the bourgeoisie—regarding control over production, and even the organisation of production, regarding a peace policy, and so forth—would never be fulfilled.

And so it turned out. The second phase in the development of the revolution, May 6 to June 9, or June 18, fully corroborated the expectations of the capitalists as to the ease with which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks could be fooled.

While Peshekhonov and Skobelev were deceiving themselves and the people with florid speeches to the effect that one hundred per cent of the profits of the capitalists would be taken away from them, that their "resistance was broken", and so forth, the capitalists continued to consolidate their position. Nothing, absolutely nothing, was undertaken during this period to curb the capitalists. The ministerial turncoats from socialism proved to be mere talking machines for distracting the attention of the oppressed classes, while the entire apparatus of state administration actually remained in the hands of the bureaucracy (the officialdom) and the bourgeoisie. The notorious Palchinsky, Deputy Minister for Industry, was a typical representative of that apparatus, blocking every measure against the capitalists. While the ministers prated everything remained as of old.

The bourgeoisie used Minister Tsereteli in particular to fight the revolution. He was sent to "pacify" Kronstadt when the local revolutionaries had the audacity to remove an appointed commissar.<sup>107</sup> The bourgeoisie launched in their newspapers an incredibly vociferous, violent and vicious campaign of lies, slander and vituperation against Kronstadt, accusing it of the desire "to secede from Russia", and repeating this and similar absurdities in a thousand ways to intimidate the petty bourgeoisie and the philistines. A most typically stupid and frightened philistine,

Tsereteli, was the most "conscientious" of all in swallowing the bait of bourgeois slander; he was the most zealous of all in "smashing up and subduing" Kronstadt, without realising that he was playing the role of a lackey of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie. He turned out to be the instrument of the "compromise" arrived at with revolutionary Kronstadt, whereby the commissar for Kronstadt was not simply appointed by the government, but was elected locally and was *confirmed* by the government. It was on such miserable compromises that the ministers who had deserted socialism for the bourgeoisie wasted their time.

Wherever a bourgeois minister could not appear in defence of the government, before the revolutionary workers or in the Soviets, Skobelev, Tsereteli, Chernov or some other "socialist" Minister appeared (or, to be precise, was sent by the bourgeoisie) and faithfully performed their assignment; he would do his level best to defend the Cabinet, whitewash the capitalists and fool the people by making promise after promise and by advising people to wait, wait and wait.

Minister Chernov particularly was engaged in bargaining with his bourgeois colleagues; down to July, to the new "crisis of power" which began after the movement of July 3-4, to the resignation of the Cadets from the Cabinet, Minister Chernov was continuously engaged in the useful and interesting work, so beneficial to the people, of "persuading" his bourgeois colleagues, exhorting them to agree at least to prohibition of the purchase and sale of land. This prohibition had been most solemnly promised to the peasants at the All-Russia Congress of Peasant Deputies in Petrograd. But the promise remained only a promise. Chernov proved unable to fulfil it either in May or in June, until the revolutionary tide, the spontaneous outbreak of July 3-4, which coincided with the resignation of the Cadets from the Cabinet, made it possible to enact this measure. Even then, however, it proved to be an isolated measure, incapable of promoting to any palpable extent the struggle of the peasants against the landowners for land.

Meanwhile, at the front, the counter-revolutionary, imperialist task of resuming the imperialist, predatory war, a task which Guchkov, so hated by the people, had been unable to accomplish, was being accomplished successfully and brilliantly by the "revolutionary democrat" Kerensky, that new-baked member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. He revelled in his own eloquence, incense was burned to him by the imperialists, who were using him as a pawn, he was flattered and worshipped—all because he served the capitalists faithfully, trying to talk the "revolutionary troops" into agreeing to resume the war being waged in pursuance of the treaties concluded by Tsar Nicholas II

with the capitalists of Britain and France, a war waged so that Russian capitalists might secure Constantinople and Lvov, Erzurum and Trebizond.

So passed the second phase of the Russian revolution—May 6 to June 9. Shielded and defended by the “socialist” Ministers, the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie grew in strength, consolidated their position and prepared an offensive both against the external enemy and against the internal enemy, i.e., the revolutionary workers.

## VII

On June 9, the revolutionary workers’ party, the Bolsheviks, was preparing for a demonstration in Petrograd to give organised expression to the irresistibly growing popular discontent and indignation. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders, entangled in compromises with the bourgeoisie and bound by the imperialist policy of an offensive, were horrified, feeling that they were losing their influence among the masses. A general howl went up against the demonstration, and the counter-revolutionary Cadets joined in this howl, this time together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Under their direction, and as a result of their policy of compromise with the capitalists, the swing of the petty-bourgeois masses to an alliance with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie became quite definite and strikingly obvious. This is the historical significance and class meaning of the crisis of June 9.

The Bolsheviks called off the demonstration, having no wish to lead the workers at that moment into a losing fight against the united Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. The latter, however, so as to retain at least a vestige of the people’s confidence, were compelled to call a general demonstration for June 18. The bourgeoisie were beside themselves with rage, rightly discerning in this a swing of the petty-bourgeois democrats towards the proletariat, and they decided to paralyse the action of the democrats by an offensive at the front.

In fact, June 18 was marked by an impressive victory for the slogans of the revolutionary proletariat, the slogans of Bolshevism, among the people of Petrograd. And on June 19 the bourgeoisie and the Bonapartist\* Kerensky solemnly announced that the offensive at the front had begun on June 18.

---

\* Bonapartism (from Bonaparte, the name of the two French emperors) is a name applied to a government which endeavours to appear non-partisan by taking advantage of a highly acute struggle between the parties of the capitalists and the workers. Actually serving the capitalists, such a government dupes the workers most of all by promises and petty concessions.

The offensive meant in effect the resumption of the predatory war in the interests of the capitalists and against the will of the vast majority of the working people. That is why the offensive was inevitably accompanied, on the one hand, by a gigantic growth of chauvinism and the transfer of military power (and consequently of state power) to the military gang of Bonapartists, and, on the other, by the use of violence against the masses, the persecution of the internationalists, the abolition of freedom of agitation, and the arrest and shooting of those who were against the war.

Whereas May 6 bound the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to the triumphal chariot of the bourgeoisie with a rope, June 19 shackled them, as servants of the capitalists, with a chain.

## VIII

Owing to the resumption of the predatory war, the bitterness of the people naturally grew even more rapidly and intensely. July 3-4 witnessed an outburst of their anger which the Bolsheviks attempted to restrain and which, of course, they had to endeavour to make as organised as possible.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, being slaves of the bourgeoisie, shackled by their master, agreed to everything: dispatching reactionary troops to Petrograd, bringing back the death penalty, disarming the workers and revolutionary troops, arresting and hounding, and closing down newspapers without trial. The power which the bourgeoisie in the government were unable to take entirely, and which the Soviets did not want to take, fell into the hands of the military clique, the Bonapartists, who, of course, were wholly backed by the Cadets and the Black Hundreds, by the landowners and capitalists.

Down the ladder, step by step. Having once set foot on the ladder of compromise with the bourgeoisie, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks slid irresistibly downwards, to rock bottom. On February 28, in the Petrograd Soviet, they promised conditional support to the bourgeois government. On May 6 they saved it from collapse and allowed themselves to be made its servants and defenders by agreeing to an offensive. On June 9 they united with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie in a campaign of furious rage, lies and slander against the revolutionary proletariat. On June 19 they approved the resumption of the predatory war. On July 3 they consented to the summoning of reactionary troops, which was the beginning of their complete surrender of power to the Bonapartists. Down the ladder, step by step.

This shameful finale of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties was not fortuitous but a consequence of the economic status of the small owners, the petty bourgeoisie, as has been repeatedly borne out by experience in Europe.

## IX

Everybody, of course, has seen the small owner bend every effort and strain every nerve to "get on in the world", to become a real master, to rise to the position of a "strong" employer, to the position of a bourgeois. As long as capitalism rules the roost, there is no alternative for the small owner other than becoming a capitalist (and that is possible at best in the case of one small owner out of a hundred), or becoming a ruined man, a semi-proletarian, and ultimately a proletarian. The same is true in politics: the petty-bourgeois democrats, especially their leaders, tend to tra.' after the bourgeoisie. The leaders of the petty-bourgeois democrats console their people with promises and assurances about the possibility of reaching agreement with the big capitalists; at best, and for a very brief period, they obtain certain minor concessions from the capitalists for a small upper section of the working people; but on every decisive issue, on every important matter, the petty-bourgeois democrats have always tailed after the bourgeoisie as a feeble appendage to them, as an obedient tool in the hands of the financial magnates. The experience of Britain and France has proved this over and over again.

The experience of the Russian revolution from February to July 1917, when events developed with unusual rapidity, particularly under the influence of the imperialist war and the deep-going crisis brought about by it, has most strikingly and palpably confirmed the old Marxist truth that the position of the petty bourgeoisie is unstable.

The lesson of the Russian revolution is that there can be no escape for the working people from the iron grip of war, famine, and enslavement by the landowners and capitalists unless they completely break with the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties and clearly understand the latter's treacherous role, unless they renounce all compromises with the bourgeoisie and resolutely side with the revolutionary workers. Only the revolutionary workers, if supported by the peasant poor, are capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists and leading the people in gaining land without compensation, complete liberty, victory over famine and the war, and a just and lasting peace.

## AFTERWORD

This article was written at the end of July, as is apparent from the text.

The history of the revolution during August has fully corroborated what is said in this article. Then, at the end of August, the Kornilov revolt<sup>108</sup> caused a new turn in the revolution by clearly demonstrating to the whole people that the Cadets, in alliance with the counter-revolutionary generals, were striving to disband the Soviets and restore the monarchy. The near future will show how strong this new turn of the revolution is, and whether it will succeed in putting an end to the fatal policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie.

*N. Lenin*

September 6, 1917

The article was written  
at the end of July, the Afterword  
on September 6 (19), 1917

The article was published  
on September 12 and 13  
(August 30 and 31) 1917  
in the newspaper *Rabochy* Nos 8 and 9  
Signed *N kov* in No 8  
and *N Lenin* in No 9

*Collected Works* Vol 25,  
pp 223 59

The Afterword was published in 1917  
in the pamphlet *N Lenin, Lessons of the  
Revolution*, Priboi Publishers, Petrograd

---

## TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.

It is possible that these lines will come too late, for events are developing with a rapidity that sometimes makes one's head spin. I am writing this on Wednesday, August 30, and the recipients will read it no earlier than Friday, September 2. Still, on chance, I consider it my duty to write the following.

The Kornilov revolt is a most unexpected (unexpected at such a moment and in such a form) and downright unbelievably sharp turn in events.

Like every sharp turn, it calls for a revision and change of tactics. And as with every revision, we must be extra-cautious not to become unprincipled.

It is my conviction that those who become unprincipled are people who (like Volodarsky) slide into defencism or (like other Bolsheviks) into a *bloc* with the S.R.s, into *supporting* the Provisional Government. Their attitude is absolutely wrong and unprincipled. We shall become defencists *only after* the transfer of power to the proletariat, *after* a peace offer, *after* the secret treaties and ties with the banks have been broken—*only afterwards*. Neither the capture of Riga *nor the capture of Petrograd* will make us defencists. (I should very much like Volodarsky to read this.) Until then we stand for a proletarian revolution, we are against the war, and we are *no* defencists.

*Even now* we must not support Kerensky's government. This is unprincipled. We may be asked: aren't we going to fight against Kornilov? Of course we must! But this is not the same thing, there is a dividing line here, which is being stepped over by some Bolsheviks who fall into compromise and allow themselves to be *carried away* by the course of events.

We shall fight, we are fighting against Kornilov, *just as Kerensky's troops do*, but we do not support Kerensky. *On the contrary*, we expose his weakness. There is the difference. It is rather



a subtle difference, but it is highly essential and must not be forgotten.

What, then, constitutes our change of tactics after the Kornilov revolt?

We are changing the *form* of our struggle against Kerensky. Without in the least relaxing our hostility towards him, without taking back a single word said against him, without renouncing the task of overthrowing him, we say that we must *take into account* the present situation. We shall not overthrow Kerensky right now. We shall approach the task of fighting against him *in a different way*, namely, we shall point out to the people (who are fighting against Kornilov) Kerensky's *weakness* and *vacillation*. That has been done in the past *as well*. Now, however, it has become the *all-important* thing and this constitutes the change.

The change, further, is that the *all-important* thing now has become the intensification of our campaign for some kind of "partial demands" to be presented to Kerensky: arrest Milyukov, arm the Petrograd workers, summon the Kronstadt, Vyborg and Helsingfors troops to Petrograd, dissolve the Duma, arrest Rodzyanko, legalise the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants, introduce workers' control over grain and factories, etc., etc. We must present these demands not only to Kerensky, and *not so much* to Kerensky, as to the workers, soldiers and peasants who have been *carried away* by the course of the struggle against Kornilov. We must keep up their *enthusiasm*, encourage them to deal with the generals and officers who have declared for Kornilov, urge *them* to demand the immediate transfer of land to the peasants, suggest to *them* that it is necessary to arrest Rodzyanko and Milyukov, dissolve the Duma, close down *Rech* and other bourgeois papers, and institute investigations against them. The "Left" S.R.s<sup>109</sup> must be especially urged on in this direction.

It would be wrong to think that we have moved farther away from the task of the proletariat winning power. No. We have come very close to it, *not directly*, but from the side. *At the moment* we must campaign not so much directly against Kerensky, as *indirectly* against him, namely, by demanding a more and more active, truly revolutionary war against Kornilov. The development of this war alone can lead *us* to power, but we must *speak* of this as little as possible in our propaganda (remembering very well that even tomorrow events may put power into our hands, and then we shall not relinquish it). It seems to me that this should be passed on in a letter (not in the papers) to the propagandists, to groups of agitators and propagandists, and to Party members in general. We must relentlessly fight against phrases about the defence of the country, about a united front of revolutionary democrats, about supporting the Provisional

Government, etc., etc., since they are just empty *phrases*. We must say: now is the time for *action*; you S.R. and Menshevik gentlemen have long since worn those phrases threadbare. Now is the time for *action*; the war against Kornilov must be conducted in a revolutionary way, by drawing the masses in, by arousing them, by inflaming them (Kerensky is *afraid* of the masses, *afraid* of the people). In the war against the Germans, *action* is required right now; *immediate and unconditional peace must be offered on precise terms*. If this is done, either a speedy peace *can* be attained or the war can be turned into a revolutionary war; if not, all the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries remain lackeys of imperialism.

---

P.S. Having read six issues of *Rabochy*,<sup>110</sup> *after* this was written, I must say that our views fully coincide. I heartily welcome the splendid editorials, press review and articles by V. M—n and Vol—y. As to Volodarsky's speech, I have read his letter to the editors,<sup>111</sup> which likewise "eliminates" my reproaches. Once more, best wishes and greetings!

*Lenin*

Written on August 30  
(September 12), 1917

First published in *Pravda* No 250,  
November 7, 1920

*Collected Works*, Vol 25,  
pp 285 89

---

## ON COMPROMISES

The term compromise in politics implies the surrender of certain demands, the renunciation of part of one's demands, by agreement with another party.

The usual idea the man in the street has about the Bolsheviks, an idea encouraged by a press which slanders them, is that the Bolsheviks will never agree to a compromise with anybody.

The idea is flattering to us as the party of the revolutionary proletariat, for it proves that even our enemies are compelled to admit our loyalty to the fundamental principles of socialism and revolution. Nevertheless, we must say that this idea is wrong. Engels was right when, in his criticism of the Manifesto of the Blanquist Communists (1873), he ridiculed their declaration. "No compromises!"<sup>112</sup> This, he said, was an empty phrase, for compromises are often unavoidably forced upon a fighting party by circumstances, and it is absurd to refuse once and for all to accept "payments on account".<sup>113</sup> The task of a truly revolutionary party is not to declare that it is impossible to renounce all compromises, but to be able, *through all compromises*, when they are unavoidable, to remain true to its principles, to its class, to its revolutionary purpose, to its task of paving the way for revolution and educating the mass of the people for victory in the revolution.

To agree, for instance, to participate in the Third and Fourth Dumas was a compromise, a temporary renunciation of revolutionary demands. But this was a compromise absolutely forced upon us, for the balance of forces made it impossible for us for the time being to conduct a mass revolutionary struggle, and in order to prepare this struggle over a long period we *had* to be able to work even from *inside* such a "pigsty". History has proved that this approach to the question by the Bolsheviks as a party was perfectly correct.

Now the question is not of a forced, but of a voluntary compromise.

Our Party, like any other political party, is striving after political domination *for itself*. Our aim is the dictatorship of the revolutionary proletariat. Six months of revolution have proved very clearly, forcefully and convincingly that this demand is correct and inevitable in the interests of *this particular* revolution, for otherwise the people will never obtain a democratic peace, land for the peasants, or complete freedom (a fully democratic republic). This has been shown and proved by the course of events during the six months of our revolution, by the struggle of the classes and parties and by the development of the crises of April 20-21, June 9-10 and 18-19, July 3-5 and August 27-31.<sup>114</sup>

The Russian revolution is experiencing so abrupt and original a turn that we, as a party, may offer a voluntary compromise—true, not to our direct and main class enemy, the bourgeoisie, but to our nearest adversaries, the “ruling” petty-bourgeois-democratic parties, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks.

We may offer a compromise to these parties only by way of exception, and only by virtue of the particular situation, which will obviously last only a very short time. And I think we should do so.

The compromise on our part is our return to the pre-July demand of all power to the Soviets and a government of S.R.s and Mensheviks responsible to the Soviets.

Now, and only now, perhaps *during only a few days* or a week or two, such a government could be set up and consolidated in a perfectly peaceful way. In all probability it could secure the peaceful *advance* of the whole Russian revolution, and provide exceptionally good chances for great strides in the world movement towards peace and the victory of socialism.

In my opinion, the Bolsheviks, who are partisans of world revolution and revolutionary methods, may and should consent to this compromise only for the sake of the revolution's peaceful development—an opportunity that is *extremely* rare in history and *extremely* valuable, an opportunity that only occurs once in a while.

The compromise would amount to the following: the Bolsheviks, without making any claim to participate in the government (which is impossible for the internationalists unless a dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants has been realised), would refrain from demanding the immediate transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasants and from employing revolutionary methods of fighting for this demand. A condition that is self-evident and not new to the S.R.s and Mensheviks

would be complete freedom of propaganda and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly without further delays or even at an earlier date.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s, being the government bloc, would then agree (assuming that the compromise had been reached) to form a government wholly and exclusively responsible to the Soviets, the latter taking over all power locally as well. This would constitute the "new" condition. I think the Bolsheviks would advance no other conditions, trusting that the revolution would proceed peacefully and party strife in the Soviets would be *peacefully overcome* thanks to really complete freedom of propaganda and to the immediate establishment of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets (new elections) and in their functioning.

Perhaps this is *already* impossible? Perhaps. But if there is even one chance in a hundred, the attempt at realising this opportunity is still worth while.

What would both "contracting" parties gain by this "compromise", i.e., the Bolsheviks, on the one hand, and the S.R. and Menshevik bloc, on the other? If *neither* side gains anything, then the compromise must be recognised as impossible, and nothing more is to be said. No matter how difficult this compromise may be at present (after July and August, two months equivalent to two decades in "peaceful", somnolent times), I think it stands a small chance of being realised. This chance has been created by the decision of the S.R.s and Mensheviks not to participate in a government together with the Cadets.

The Bolsheviks would gain the opportunity of quite freely advocating their views and of trying to win influence in the Soviets under a really complete democracy. In words, "everybody" now concedes the Bolsheviks this freedom. In reality, this freedom is *impossible* under a bourgeois government or a government in which the bourgeoisie participate, or under any government, in fact, other than the Soviets. Under a Soviet government, such freedom would be *possible* (we do not say it would be a certainty, but still it would be possible). For the sake of such a possibility at such a difficult time, it would be worth compromising with the present majority in the Soviets. *We* have nothing to fear from real democracy, for reality is on our side, and even the course of development of trends within the S.R. and Menshevik parties, which are hostile to us, proves us right.

The Mensheviks and S.R.s would gain in that they would at once obtain every opportunity to carry out *their* bloc's programme with the support of the obviously overwhelming majority of the people and in that they would secure for themselves the "peaceful" use of their majority in the Soviets.

Of course, there would probably be two voices heard from this bloc, which is heterogeneous both because it is a bloc and because petty-bourgeois democracy is *always* less homogeneous than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

One voice would say: we cannot follow the same road as the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat. It will demand too much anyway and will entice the peasant poor by demagogy. It will demand peace and a break with the Allies. That is impossible. We are better off and safer with the bourgeoisie; after all, we have not parted ways with them but only had a temporary *quarrel*, and only over the Kornilov incident. We have quarrelled, but we shall make it up. Moreover, the Bolsheviks are not "ceding" us anything, for their attempts at insurrection are as doomed to defeat as was the Commune of 1871.

The other voice would say: the allusion to the Commune is very superficial and even foolish. For, in the first place, the Bolsheviks have learnt something since 1871; they would not fail to seize the banks, and would not refuse to advance on Versailles. Under such conditions even the Commune might have been victorious. Furthermore, the Commune could not immediately offer the people what the Bolsheviks will be able to offer if they come to power, namely, land to the peasants, an immediate offer of peace, real control over production, an honest peace with the Ukrainians, Finns, etc. The Bolsheviks, to put it bluntly, hold ten times more "trumps" than the Commune did. In the second place, the Commune, after all, means a strenuous civil war, a set-back to peaceful cultural development for a long time to come, an opportunity for all sorts of MacMahons and Kornilovs to operate and plot with greater ease—and such operations are a menace to our whole bourgeois society. Is it wise to risk a Commune?

Now a Commune is inevitable in Russia if we do not take power into our own hands, if things remain in as grave a state as they were between May 6 and August 31. Every revolutionary worker and soldier will inevitably think about the Commune and believe in it; he will inevitably attempt to bring it about, for he will argue: "The people are perishing; war, famine and ruin are spreading. Only the Commune can save us. So let us all perish, let us die, but let us set up the Commune." Such thoughts are inevitable with the workers, and it will not be as easy to crush the Commune now as it was in 1871. The Russian Commune will have allies throughout the world, allies a hundred times stronger than those the Commune had in 1871. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune? I cannot agree, either, that the Bolsheviks virtually cede us nothing by their compromise. For, in all civilised countries, civilised ministers value highly every agreement with the proletariat in war-time, however small. They value it very,

very highly. And these are men of action, real ministers. The Bolsheviks are rapidly becoming stronger, in spite of repression, and the weakness of their press. . . . Is it wise for us to risk a Commune?

We have a safe majority; the peasant poor will not wake up for some time to come; we are safe for our lifetime. I do not believe that in a peasant country the majority will follow the extremists. And against an obvious majority, no insurrection is possible in a really democratic republic. This is what the second voice would say.

There may also be a third voice coming from among the supporters of Martov or Spiridonova, which would say: I am indignant, "comrades", that both of you, speaking about the Commune and its likelihood, unhesitatingly side with its opponents. In one form or another, both of you side with those who suppressed the Commune. I will not undertake to campaign for the Commune and I cannot promise beforehand to fight in its ranks as every Bolshevik will do, but I must say that *if* the Commune does start *in spite of* my efforts, I shall rather help its defenders than its opponents.

The medley of voices in the "bloc" is great and inevitable, for a host of shades is represented among the petty-bourgeois democrats—from the complete bourgeois, perfectly eligible for a post in the government, down to the semi-pauper who is not yet capable of taking up the proletarian position. Nobody knows what will be the result of this medley of voices at any given moment.

\* \* \*

The above lines were written on Friday, September 1, but due to unforeseen circumstances (under Kerensky, as history will tell, not all Bolsheviks were free to choose their domicile) they did not reach the editorial office that day. After reading Saturday's and today's (Sunday's) papers, I say to myself: perhaps it is already too late to offer a compromise. Perhaps the few days in which a peaceful development was *still* possible have passed *too*. Yes, to all appearances, they have already passed. In one way or another, Kerensky will abandon both the S.R. Party and the S.R.s themselves, and will consolidate his position with the aid of the bourgeoisie *without* the S.R.s, and thanks to their inaction. . . . Yes, to all appearances, the days when by chance the path of peaceful development became possible have *already* passed. All that remains is to send these notes to the editor with the request to have them entitled: "Belated Thoughts". Perhaps even belated thoughts are sometimes not without interest.

Written on September 1-3 (14-16), 1917

Published in *Rabochy Put* No. 3,  
September 19 (6), 1917  
Signed *N. Lenin*

Collected Works, Vol. 25  
pp. 30, 10

---

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>115</sup>**

The Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., on the basis of the resolution on the political situation adopted by the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks),<sup>116</sup> and applying that resolution to the present situation, at its plenary meeting states:

1. In the two months from July 3 to September 3, due to the unparalleled speed of the revolution, the course of the class struggle and the development of political events have carried the whole country as far forward as it would have been impossible for the country to advance over many years in peace-time, without revolution and war.

2. It becomes more and more apparent that the events of July 3-5 were the turning-point of the whole revolution. Without a correct estimate of these events, it is impossible to correctly estimate either the proletariat's tasks, or the speed of development of revolutionary events, which is beyond our control.

3. The slander against the Bolsheviks, which the bourgeoisie spread with tremendous zeal and which they put about very widely among the people with the aid of the millions invested in capitalist papers and publishing houses, is being exposed more and more rapidly and widely. First it was the workers in the capital and in the large cities, and then the peasants, who realised more and more that the slander against the Bolsheviks is one of the main weapons used by the landowners and capitalists in the struggle against the defenders of the interests of the workers and poor peasants, i.e., against the Bolsheviks.

4. An outright attempt was made to camouflage the Kornilov revolt, i.e., a revolt of generals and officers behind whom stand the landowners and the capitalists headed by the Cadet Party (the "people's freedom" party), by bringing up again the old slander against the Bolsheviks. It was this that helped finally to open the eyes of the broadest sections of the people to the true



meaning of the bourgeois slander against the Bolshevik workers' party, the party of the true defenders of the poor.

5. Had our Party refused to support the July 3-4 mass movement, which burst out spontaneously despite our attempts to prevent it, we should have actually and completely betrayed the proletariat, since the people were moved to action by their well-founded and just anger at the protraction of the imperialist war, which is a predatory war conducted in the interests of the capitalists, and at the inaction of the government and the Soviets in regard to the bourgeoisie, who are intensifying and aggravating economic disruption and famine.

6. In spite of all the efforts of the bourgeoisie and the government, in spite of the arrest of hundreds of Bolsheviks, the seizure of their papers and documents, the search of their editorial offices, etc.—in spite of all this nobody has succeeded, and nobody will ever succeed, in proving the slander that our Party's aim in the July 3-4 movement was anything other than a "peaceful and organised" demonstration with the slogan of transfer of all state power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

7. It would have been wrong if the Bolsheviks had aimed to seize power on July 3-4, since neither the majority of the people nor even the majority of the workers at that time had yet actually experienced the counter-revolutionary policies of generals in the army, of the landowners in the countryside, and of the capitalists in the town. These policies were only revealed to the masses after July 5, and stemmed from a compromise between the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other. None of our Party organisations, either central or local, advocated either in writing or by word of mouth, the slogan of seizing power on July 3-4; none of them even discussed this question.

8. The real mistake of our Party on July 3-4, as events now reveal, was merely that the Party considered the general situation in the country *less* revolutionary than it proved to be, that the Party *still* considered a peaceful development of political changes possible through an alteration in the Soviets' policies, whereas in reality the Mensheviks and S.R.s had become so much entangled and bound by compromising with the bourgeoisie, and the bourgeoisie had become so counter-revolutionary, that peaceful development was no longer possible. This erroneous view, however, which was sustained only by the hope that events would not develop too fast, our Party could not have got over other than by participating in the popular movement of July 3-4 with the slogan "All power to the Soviets" and with the aim of making the movement peaceful and organised.

9. The historic significance of the Kornilov revolt is that with extraordinary force, it opened the people's eyes to a fact which the S.R.s and Mensheviks had concealed and still are concealing under conciliatory phrases. The fact is that the landowners and the bourgeoisie, headed by the Cadet Party, and the generals and officers who are on their side, have organised themselves; they are ready to commit, or are committing, the most outrageous crimes, such as surrendering Riga (followed by Petrograd) to the Germans, laying the war front open, putting the Bolshevik regiments under fire, starting a mutiny, leading troops against the capital with the "Savage Division"<sup>117</sup> at their head, etc. The purpose of all this is to seize power completely and put it in the hands of the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the power of the landowners in the countryside, and to drench the country in the blood of workers and peasants.

The Kornilov revolt has proved for Russia what has been proved throughout history for all countries, namely, that the bourgeoisie will betray their country and commit any crime to retain both their power over the people and their profits.

10. The workers and peasants of Russia have no other alternative than the most determined struggle against, and victory over, the landowners and the bourgeoisie, over the Cadet Party and the generals and officers sympathising with it. Only the urban working class can lead the people, i.e., all working people, into such a struggle and to such a victory, provided all state power passes into its hands and provided it is supported by the peasant poor.

11. Events in the Russian revolution, particularly since May 6, and even more so since July 3, have been developing with such incredible, storm- or hurricane-like velocity, that it can by no means be the task of the Party to speed them up. All efforts, in fact, must be directed towards keeping up with events and doing on time our work of explaining to the workers, and to the working people in general, as much as we can, the changes in the situation and in the course of the class struggle. This is still the main task of our Party; we must explain to the people that the situation is extremely critical, that every action may end in an explosion, and that therefore a premature uprising may cause the greatest harm. At the same time, the critical situation is inevitably leading the working class—perhaps with catastrophic speed—to a situation in which, due to a change in events beyond its control, it will find itself compelled to wage a determined battle with the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie and to gain power.

12. The Kornilov revolt fully revealed that the entire army *hates the General Staff*. This had to be admitted even by those Mensheviks and S.R.s who through months of effort had proved

their hatred for the Bolsheviks and their defence of the policy of agreement between the workers and peasants, on the one hand, and the landowners and the bourgeoisie, on the other. The hatred of the army for the General Staff will not die down but will become stronger now that Kerensky's government has confined itself to substituting Alexeyev for Kornilov, leaving Klembovsky and other Kornilov generals, and has done absolutely nothing substantial to democratise the armed forces and remove the counter-revolutionary commanders. Soviets, which tolerate and support this weak, wavering, unprincipled policy of Kerensky and missed another opportunity to take all power peacefully when the Kornilov revolt was being liquidated, become guilty not only of conciliation but even of criminal conciliation.

The army, which hates the General Staff and does not want to fight a war it now knows to be a war of conquest, is inevitably doomed to new catastrophes.

13. Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to pursue a peace policy, not merely in words, like the Mensheviks and S.R.s, who in practice support the bourgeoisie and their secret treaties, but in deeds. Specifically, the working class will immediately offer *all* peoples open, precise, clear and *just* peace terms. This will be done irrespective of the military situation, even if Kornilov's generals follow up the surrender of Riga by that of Petrograd. The working class can do this in the name of the entire people, since the overwhelming majority of Russia's workers and peasants oppose the present war of annexation and support a peace on just terms, without annexations and indemnities.

The S.R.s and Mensheviks are deceiving themselves and the people when they spend months talking about this peace. The working class, on gaining power, will offer this peace to all without losing a single day.

The capitalists of all countries have so much difficulty in stemming the workers' revolution against war—a revolution which is growing everywhere—that if the Russian revolution were to pass from impotent and pitiful yearning for peace to a forthright peace offer coupled with the publication and annulment of secret treaties, etc., there are ninety-nine chances in a hundred that peace would quickly follow, that the capitalists would be unable to stand in the way of peace.

If, however, the highly improbable were to happen and the capitalists were to reject the peace terms of the Russian workers' government, against the will of their peoples, a revolution in Europe would come a hundred times nearer, and our workers' and peasants' army would elect for itself not hated but respected commanders and military leaders. The army would see the jus-

tice of the war once peace had been offered, the secret treaties torn up, the alliance with the landowners and the bourgeoisie severed, and all land given to the peasants. Only then would the war become a just war for Russia, only this war would the workers and peasants fight of their own free will, without being bludgeoned into fighting; and this war would bring even nearer the inevitable workers' revolution in the advanced countries.

14. Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to guarantee the immediate transfer of all landed estates to the peasants without compensation. This must not be put off. The Constituent Assembly will legalise the transfer, but it is not the peasants' fault that the Constituent Assembly is being delayed. The peasants daily become more convinced that it is impossible to get the land by agreement with the landowners and the capitalists. The land can only be obtained through a very close, brotherly alliance of the poor peasants and the workers.

Chernov's resignation from the government after he had for months tried to uphold the interests of the peasants through concessions, big and small, to the Cadet landowners, and after all these attempts had failed, revealed with particular clarity the hopelessness of the policy of conciliation. The peasants see, know and feel that since July 5 the landowners have become arrogant in the villages and that it is necessary to curb them and render them harmless.

15. Only the working class, when it has gained power, will be able to put an end to economic disruption and the impending famine. Since May 6 the government has kept on promising control, but it has done and could do nothing because the capitalists and landowners obstructed all work. Unemployment is growing, famine is approaching, currency is losing value. Peshekhonov's resignation after the fixed prices have doubled will aggravate the crisis, and it again shows the utter feebleness and impotence of the government. Only workers' control over production and distribution can save the situation. Only a workers' government will curb the capitalists, will bring heroic support from all working people for the efforts of *state power*, and will establish order and a fair exchange of grain for manufactured goods.

16. The confidence of the peasant poor in the urban working class, temporarily undermined by the slander of the bourgeoisie and by hopes put in the policy of conciliation, has been returning, particularly after the arrests in the countryside and the various kinds of persecution of working people after July 5 and then the Kornilov revolt opened the people's eyes. One of the signs that the people are losing faith in conciliation with the capitalists is that among the S.R.s and Mensheviks, the two main parties responsible for introducing this policy of conciliation and bring-

ing it to a culmination, there have been growing, especially since July 5, a discontent within these parties and a struggle against conciliation. This opposition at the last Socialist-Revolutionary "Council" and at the Menshevik congress involved about two-fifths (40 per cent) of the members.

17. The whole course of events, all economic and political conditions, everything that is happening in the armed forces, are increasingly paving the way for the successful winning of power by the working class, which will bring peace, bread and freedom and will hasten the victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries.

Written not later than  
September 3 (16), 1917

First published in 1925  
in *Lenin Miscellany IV*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25,  
pp 311-17

---

## THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO COMBAT IT

### FAMINE IS APPROACHING

Unavoidable catastrophe is threatening Russia. The railways are incredibly disorganised and the disorganisation is progressing. The railways will come to a standstill. The delivery of raw materials and coal to the factories will cease. The delivery of grain will cease. The capitalists are deliberately and unremittingly sabotaging (damaging, stopping, disrupting, hampering) production, hoping that an unparalleled catastrophe will mean the collapse of the republic and democracy, and of the Soviets and proletarian and peasant associations generally, thus facilitating the return to a monarchy and the restoration of the unlimited power of the bourgeoisie and the landowners.

The danger of a great catastrophe and of famine is imminent. All the newspapers have written about this time and again. A tremendous number of resolutions have been adopted by the parties and by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—resolutions which admit that a catastrophe is unavoidable, that it is very close, that extreme measures are necessary to combat it, that "heroic efforts" by the people are necessary to avert ruin, and so on.

Everybody says this. Everybody admits it. Everybody has decided it is so.

Yet nothing is being done.

Six months of revolution have elapsed. The catastrophe is even closer. Unemployment has assumed a mass scale. To think that there is a shortage of goods in the country, the country is perishing from a shortage of food and labour, although there is a sufficient quantity of grain and raw materials, and yet in such a country, at so critical a moment, there is mass unemployment! What better evidence is needed to show that after six months of revolution (which some call a great revolution, but which so far it would perhaps be fairer to call a rotten revolution), in a democratic republic, with an abundance of unions, organs and



institutions which proudly call themselves "revolutionary-democratic", absolutely *nothing* of any importance has actually been done to avert catastrophe, to avert famine? We are nearing ruin with increasing speed. The war will not wait and is causing increasing dislocation in every sphere of national life.

Yet the slightest attention and thought will suffice to satisfy anyone that the ways of combating catastrophe and famine are available, that the measures required to combat them are quite clear, simple, perfectly feasible, and fully within reach of the people's forces, and that these measures are *not* being adopted *only* because, *exclusively* because, their realisation would affect the fabulous profits of a handful of landowners and capitalists.

And, indeed, it is safe to say that every single speech, every single article in a newspaper of any trend, every single resolution passed by any meeting or institution quite clearly and explicitly recognises the chief and principal measure of combating, of averting, catastrophe and famine. This measure is control, supervision, accounting, regulation by the state, introduction of a proper distribution of labour-power in the production and distribution of goods, husbanding of the people's forces, the elimination of all wasteful effort, economy of effort. Control, supervision and accounting are the prime requisites for combating catastrophe and famine. This is indisputable and universally recognised. And it is just what *is not being done* from fear of encroaching on the supremacy of the landowners and capitalists, on their immense, fantastic and scandalous profits, profits derived from high prices and war contracts (and, directly or indirectly, nearly everybody is now "working" for the war), profits about which everybody knows and which everybody sees, and over which everybody is sighing and groaning.

And absolutely nothing is being done to introduce such control, accounting and supervision by the state as would be in the least effective.

## COMPLETE GOVERNMENT INACTIVITY

There is a universal, systematic and persistent sabotage of every kind of control, supervision and accounting and of all state attempts to institute them. And one must be incredibly naïve not to understand, one must be an utter hypocrite to pretend not to understand, where this sabotage comes from and by what means it is being carried on. For this sabotage by the bankers and capitalists, their *frustration* of every kind of control, supervision and accounting, is being adapted to the state forms of a democratic republic, to the existence of "revolutionary-democratic" institu-



tions. The capitalist gentlemen have learnt very well a fact which all supporters of scientific socialism profess to recognise but which the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to forget as soon as their friends had secured cushy jobs as ministers, deputy ministers, etc. That fact is that the economic substance of capitalist exploitation is in no wise affected by the substitution of republican-democratic forms of government for monarchist forms, and that, consequently, the reverse is also true—only the *form* of the struggle for the inviolability and sanctity of capitalist profits need be changed in order to uphold them under a democratic republic as effectively as under an absolute monarchy.

The present, modern republican-democratic sabotage of every kind of control, accounting and supervision consists in the capitalists “eagerly” accepting in words the “principle” of control and the necessity for control (as, of course, do all Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), insisting only that this control be introduced “gradually”, methodically and in a “state-regulated” way. In practice, however, these specious catchwords serve to conceal the *frustration* of control, its nullification, its reduction to a fiction, the mere playing at control, the delay of all business-like and practically effective measures, the creation of extraordinarily complicated, cumbersome and bureaucratically lifeless institutions of control which are hopelessly dependent on the capitalists, and which do absolutely nothing and cannot do anything.

So as not to trot out bald statements, let us cite witnesses from among the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, i.e., the very people who had the majority in the Soviets during the first six months of revolution, who took part in the “coalition government” and who are therefore politically responsible to the Russian workers and peasants for winking at the capitalists and allowing them to frustrate all control.

*Izvestia TsIK* (i. e., the newspaper of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies), the official organ of the highest of the so-called “fully authorised” (no joke!) bodies of “revolutionary” democracy, in issue No. 164, of September 7, 1917, printed a *resolution* by a special control organisation created and run by these very Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. This special institution is the Economic Department of the Central Executive Committee. Its resolution officially records as a fact “*the complete inactivity of the central bodies set up under the government for the regulation of economic life*”.

Now, how could one imagine any more eloquent testimony to the collapse of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary policy than this statement signed by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves?

The need for the regulation of economic life was already recognised under tsarism, and certain institutions were set up for the purpose. But under tsarism economic chaos steadily grew and reached monstrous proportions. It was at once recognised that it was the task of the republican, revolutionary government to adopt effective and resolute measures to put an end to the economic chaos. When the "coalition" government was formed with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating, it promised and undertook, in its most solemn public declaration of May 6, to introduce state control and regulation. The Tsere-telis and Chernovs, like all the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, vowed and swore that not only were they responsible for the government, but that the "authorised bodies of revolutionary democracy" under their control actually kept an eye on the work of the government and verified its activities.

Four months have passed since May 6, four long months, in which Russia has sacrificed the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers for the sake of the absurd imperialist "offensive", in which chaos and disaster have been advancing in seven-league strides, in which the summer season afforded an exceptional opportunity to do a great deal in the matter of water transport, agriculture, prospecting for minerals, and so on and so forth—and after four months the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries have been obliged officially to admit the "complete inactivity" of the control institutions set up under the government!!

And these Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, with the serious mien of statesmen, now prate (I am writing this on the very eve of the Democratic Conference of September 12<sup>11b</sup>) that matters can be furthered by replacing the coalition with the Cadets by a coalition with commercial and industrial Kit Kityches,<sup>119</sup> the Ryabushinskys, Publikovs, Tereshchenkos and Co.

How, one may ask, are we to explain this astonishing blindness of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries? Are we to regard them as political babes in the wood who in their extreme foolishness and naïveté do not realise what they are doing and err in good faith? Or does the abundance of posts they occupy as ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, commissars and the like have the property of engendering a special kind of "political" blindness?

### **CONTROL MEASURES ARE KNOWN TO ALL AND EASY TO TAKE**

One may ask: aren't methods and measures of control extremely complex, difficult, untried and even unknown? Isn't the delay due to the fact that although the statesmen of the Cadet Party,

the merchant and industrial class, and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties have for six months been toiling in the sweat of their brow, investigating, studying and discovering measures and methods of control, still the problem is incredibly difficult and has not yet been solved?

Unfortunately, this is how they are trying to present matters to hoodwink the ignorant, illiterate and downtrodden muzhiks and the Simple Simons who believe everything and never look into things. In reality, however, even tsarism, even the "old regime", when it set up the War Industries Committees, *knew* the principal measure, the chief method and way to introduce control, namely, by uniting the population according to profession, purpose of work, branch of labour, etc. But tsarism *feared* the union of the population and therefore did its best to restrict and artificially hinder this generally known, very easy and quite practical method and way of control.

All the belligerent countries, suffering as they are from the extreme burdens and hardships of the war, suffering—in one degree or another—from economic chaos and famine, have long ago outlined, determined, applied and tested a *whole series* of control measures, which consist almost invariably in uniting the population and in setting up or encouraging unions of various kinds, in which state representatives participate, which are under the supervision of the state, etc. All these measures of control are known to all, much has been said and written about them, and the laws passed by the advanced belligerent powers relating to control have been translated into Russian or expounded in detail in the Russian press.

If our state really *wanted* to exercise control in a businesslike and earnest fashion, if its institutions had not condemned themselves to "complete inactivity" by their servility to the capitalists, all the state would have to do would be to draw freely on the rich store of control measures which are already known and have been used in the past. The only obstacle to this—an obstacle concealed from the eyes of the people by the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks—was, and still is, that control would bring to light the fabulous profits of the capitalists and would cut the ground from under these profits.

To explain this most important question more clearly (a question which is essentially equivalent to that of the programme of *any* truly revolutionary government that would wish to save Russia from war and famine), let us enumerate these principal measures of control and examine each of them.

We shall see that all a government would have had to do, if its name of revolutionary-democratic government were not merely a joke, would have been to decree, in the very first week of its

existence, the adoption of the principal measures of control, to provide for strict and severe punishment to be meted out to capitalists who fraudulently evaded control, and to call upon the population itself to exercise supervision over the capitalists and see to it that they scrupulously observed the regulations on control—and control would have been introduced in Russia long ago.

These principal measures are:

(1) Amalgamation of all banks into a single bank, and state control over its operations, or nationalisation of the banks.

(2) Nationalisation of the syndicates, i.e., the largest, monopolistic capitalist associations (sugar, oil, coal, iron and steel, and other syndicates).

(3) Abolition of commercial secrecy.

(4) Compulsory syndication (i.e., compulsory amalgamation into associations) of industrialists, merchants and employers generally.

(5) Compulsory organisation of the population into consumers' societies, or encouragement of such organisation, and the exercise of control over it.

Let us see what the significance of each of these measures would be if carried out in a revolutionary-democratic way.

## NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS

The banks, as we know, are centres of modern economic life, the principal nerve centres of the whole capitalist economic system. To talk about "regulating economic life" and yet evade the question of the nationalisation of the banks means either betraying the most profound ignorance or deceiving the "common people" by florid words and grandiloquent promises with the deliberate intention of not fulfilling these promises.

It is absurd to control and regulate deliveries of grain, or the production and distribution of goods generally, without controlling and regulating bank operations. It is like trying to snatch at odd kopeks and closing one's eyes to millions of rubles. Banks nowadays are so closely and intimately bound up with trade (in grain and everything else) and with industry that without "laying hands" on the banks nothing of any value, nothing "revolutionary-democratic", can be accomplished.

But perhaps for the state to "lay hands" on the banks is a very difficult and complicated operation? They usually try to scare philistines with this very idea—that is, the capitalists and their defenders try it, because it is to their advantage to do so.

In reality, however, nationalisation of the banks, which would not deprive any "owner" of a single kopek, presents absolutely no technical or cultural difficulties, and is being delayed *exclusive-*

ly because of the vile greed of an insignificant handful of rich people. If nationalisation of the banks is so often confused with the confiscation of private property, it is the bourgeois press, which has an interest in deceiving the public, that is to blame for this widespread confusion.

The ownership of the capital wielded by and concentrated in the banks is certified by printed and written certificates called shares, bonds, bills, receipts, etc. Not a single one of these certificates would be invalidated or altered if the banks were nationalised, i.e., if all the banks were amalgamated into a single state bank. Whoever owned fifteen rubles on a savings account would continue to be the owner of fifteen rubles after the nationalisation of the banks; and whoever had fifteen million rubles would continue after the nationalisation of the banks to have fifteen million rubles in the form of shares, bonds, bills, commercial certificates and so on.

What, then, is the significance of nationalisation of the banks?

It is that no effective control of any kind over the individual banks and their operations is possible (even if commercial secrecy, etc., were abolished) because it is impossible to keep track of the extremely complex, involved and wily tricks that are used in drawing up balance-sheets, founding fictitious enterprises and subsidiaries, enlisting the services of figureheads, and so on, and so forth. Only the amalgamation of all banks into one, which in itself would imply no change whatever in respect of ownership, and which, we repeat, would not deprive any owner of a single kopek, would make it *possible* to exercise real control—provided, of course, all the other measures indicated above were carried out. Only by nationalising the banks *can* the state *put itself in a position* to know where and how, whence and when, millions and billions of rubles flow. And only control over the banks, over the centre, over the pivot and chief mechanism of capitalist circulation, would make it possible to organise real and not fictitious control over all economic life, over the production and distribution of staple goods, and organise that “regulation of economic life” which otherwise is inevitably doomed to remain a ministerial phrase designed to fool the common people. Only control over banking operations, provided they were concentrated in a single state bank, would make it possible, if certain other easily-practicable measures were adopted, to organise the effective collection of income tax in such a way as to prevent the concealment of property and incomes; for at present the income tax is very largely a fiction.

Nationalisation of the banks has only to be decreed and it would be carried out by the directors and employees themselves. No special machinery, no special preparatory steps on the part of

the state would be required, for this is a measure that can be effected by a single decree, "at a single stroke". It was made economically feasible by capitalism itself once it had developed to the stage of bills, shares, bonds and so on. *All* that is required is to *unify accountancy*. And if the revolutionary-democratic government were to decide that immediately, by telegraph, meetings of managers and employees should be called in every city, and conferences in every region and in the country as a whole, for the immediate amalgamation of all banks into a single state bank, this reform would be carried out in a few weeks. Of course, it would be the managers and the higher bank officials who would offer resistance, who would try to deceive the state, delay matters, and so on, for these gentlemen would lose their highly remunerative posts and the opportunity of performing highly profitable fraudulent operations. *That is the heart of the matter*. But there is not the slightest technical difficulty in the way of the amalgamation of the banks; and if the state power were revolutionary not only in word (i.e., if it did not fear to do away with inertia and routine), if it were democratic not only in word (i.e., if it acted in the interests of the majority of the people and not of a handful of rich men), it would be enough to decree confiscation of property and imprisonment as the penalty for managers, board members and big shareholders for the slightest delay or for attempting to conceal documents and accounts. It would be enough, for example, to organise the poorer employees *separately* and to reward them for detecting fraud and delay on the part of the rich for nationalisation of the banks to be effected as smoothly and rapidly as can be.

The advantages accruing to the whole people from nationalisation of the banks—*not* to the workers especially (for the workers have little to do with banks) but to the mass of peasants and small industrialists—would be enormous. The saving in labour would be gigantic, and, assuming that the state would retain the former number of bank employees, nationalisation would be a highly important step towards making the use of the banks universal, towards increasing the number of their branches, putting their operations within easier reach, etc., etc. The availability of credit on easy terms for the *small* owners, for the peasants, would increase immensely. As to the state, it would for the first time be in a position first to *review* all the chief monetary operations, which would be unconcealed, then to *control* them, then to *regulate* economic life, and finally to *obtain* millions and billions for major state transactions, without paying the capitalist gentlemen sky-high "commissions" for their "services". That is the reason—and the only reason—why all the capitalists, all the bourgeois professors, all the bourgeoisie, and all the Plekhanovs,

Potresovs and Co., who serve them, are prepared to fight tooth and nail against nationalisation of the banks and invent thousands of excuses to prevent the adoption of this very easy and very pressing measure, although *even* from the standpoint of the "defence" of the country, i.e., from the military standpoint, this measure would provide a gigantic advantage and would tremendously enhance the "military might" of the country.

The following objection might be raised: why do such advanced states as Germany and the U.S.A. "regulate economic life" so magnificently without even thinking of nationalising the banks?

Because, we reply, *both* these states are not merely capitalist, but also imperialist states, although one of them is a monarchy and the other a republic. As such, they carry out the reforms they need by reactionary-bureaucratic methods, whereas we are speaking here of revolutionary-democratic methods.

This "little difference" is of major importance. In most cases it is "not the custom" to think of it. The term "revolutionary democracy" has become with us (especially among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks) almost a conventional phrase, like the expression "thank God", which is also used by people who are not so ignorant as to believe in God; or like the expression "honourable citizen", which is sometimes used even in addressing staff members of *Dyen*<sup>120</sup> or *Yedinstvo*, although nearly everybody guesses that these newspapers have been founded and are maintained by the capitalists in the interests of the capitalists, and that there is therefore very little "honourable" about the pseudo-socialists contributing to these newspapers.

If we do not employ the phrase "revolutionary democracy" as a stereotyped ceremonial phrase, as a conventional epithet, but *reflect* on its meaning, we find that to be a democrat means reckoning in reality with the interests of the majority of the people and not the minority, and that to be a revolutionary means destroying everything harmful and obsolete in the most resolute and ruthless manner.

Neither in America nor in Germany, as far as we know, is any claim laid by either the government or the ruling classes to the name "revolutionary democrats", to which our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks lay claim (and which they prostitute).

In Germany there are only *four* very large private banks of national importance. In America there are only *two*. It is easier, more convenient, more profitable for the financial magnates of those banks to unite privately, surreptitiously, in a reactionary and not a revolutionary way, in a bureaucratic and not a democratic way, bribing government officials (this is the general rule both in America and in Germany), and preserving the private

character of the banks in order to preserve secrecy of operations, to milk the state of millions upon millions in "super-profits", and to make financial frauds possible.

Both America and Germany "regulate economic life" in such a way as to create conditions of *war-time penal servitude* for the workers (and partly for the peasants) and a *paradise* for the bankers and capitalists. Their regulation consists in "squeezing" the workers to the point of starvation, while the capitalists are guaranteed (surreptitiously, in a reactionary-bureaucratic fashion) profits *higher* than before the war.

Such a course is quite possible in republican-imperialist Russia too. Indeed, it is the course being followed not only by the Milyukovs and Shingaryovs, but also by Kerensky in partnership with Tereshchenko, Nekrasov, Bernatsky, Prokopovich and Co., who *also uphold*, in a reactionary-bureaucratic manner, the "inviolability" of the banks and their sacred right to fabulous profits. So let us better tell the *truth*, namely, that in republican Russia they want to regulate economic life in a reactionary-bureaucratic manner, but "often" find it difficult to do so owing to the existence of the "Soviets", which Kornilov No. 1 did not manage to disband, but which Kornilov No. 2 will try to disband.

That would be the truth. And this simple if bitter truth is more useful for the enlightenment of the people than the honeyed lies about "our", "great", "revolutionary" democracy.

\* \* \*

Nationalisation of the banks would greatly facilitate the simultaneous nationalisation of the insurance business, i.e., the amalgamation of all the insurance companies into one, the centralisation of their operations, and state control over them. Here, too, congresses of insurance company employees could carry out this amalgamation immediately and without any great effort, provided a revolutionary-democratic government decreed this and ordered directors and big shareholders to effect the amalgamation without the slightest delay and held every one of them strictly accountable for it. The capitalists have invested hundreds of millions of rubles in the insurance business; the work is all done by the employees. The amalgamation of this business would lead to lower insurance premiums, would provide a host of facilities and conveniences for the insured and would make it possible to increase their number without increasing expenditure of effort and funds. Absolutely nothing but the inertia, routine and self-interest of a handful of holders of remunerative jobs are delaying this reform, which among other things, would enhance the



country's defence potential by economising national labour and creating a number of highly important opportunities to "regulate economic life" not in word, but in deed.

## NATIONALISATION OF THE SYNDICATES

Capitalism differs from the old, pre-capitalistic systems of economy in having created the closest interconnection and interdependence of the various branches of the economy. Were this not so, incidentally, no steps towards socialism would be technically feasible. Modern capitalism, under which the banks dominate production, has carried this interdependence of the various branches of the economy to the utmost. The banks and the more important branches of industry and commerce have become inseparably merged. This means, on the one hand, that it is impossible to nationalise the banks alone, without proceeding to create a state monopoly of commercial and industrial syndicates (sugar, coal, iron, oil, etc.), and without nationalising them. It means, on the other hand, that if carried out in earnest, the regulation of economic activity would demand the simultaneous nationalisation of the banks and the syndicates.

Let us take the sugar syndicate as an example. It came into being under tsarism, and at that time developed into a huge capitalist combine of splendidly equipped refineries. And, of course, this combine, thoroughly imbued with the most reactionary and bureaucratic spirit, secured scandalously high profits for the capitalists and reduced its employees to the status of humiliated and downtrodden slaves lacking any rights. Even at that time the state controlled and regulated production—in the interests of the rich, the magnates.

All that remains to be done here is to transform reactionary-bureaucratic regulation into revolutionary-democratic regulation by simple decrees providing for the summoning of a congress of employees, engineers, directors and shareholders, for the introduction of uniform accountancy, for control by the workers' unions, etc. This is an exceedingly simple thing, yet it has not been done! Under what is a democratic republic, the regulation of the sugar industry *actually* remains reactionary-bureaucratic; everything remains as of old—the dissipation of national labour, routine and stagnation, and the enrichment of the Bobrinskys and Tere-shchenkos. Democrats and not bureaucrats, the workers and other employees and not the "sugar barons", should be called upon to exercise independent initiative—and this could and should be done in a few days, at a single stroke, if only the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks did not befog the minds of the people

by plans for "association" with these very sugar barons, for the very association with the wealthy from which the "complete inaction" of the government in the matter of regulating economic life follows with absolute inevitability, and of which it is a consequence.\*

Take the oil business. It was to a vast extent "socialised" by the earlier development of capitalism. Just a couple of oil barons wield millions and hundreds of millions of rubles, clipping coupons and raking in fabulous profits from a "business" which is *already* actually, technically and socially organised on a national scale and is *already* being conducted by hundreds and thousands of employees, engineers, etc. Nationalisation of the oil industry could be effected *at once* by, and is imperative for, a revolutionary-democratic state, especially when the latter suffers from an acute crisis and when it is essential to economise national labour and to increase the output of fuel at all costs. It is clear that here bureaucratic control can achieve nothing, can change nothing, for the "oil barons" can cope with the Tereshchenkos, the Kerenskys, the Avksentyevs and the Skobelevs as easily as they coped with the tsar's ministers—by means of delays, excuses and promises, and by bribing the bourgeois press directly or indirectly (this is called "public opinion", and the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs "reckon" with it), by bribing officials (left by the Kerenskys and Avksentyevs in their old jobs in the old state machinery which remains intact).

If anything real is to be done bureaucracy must be abandoned for democracy, and in a truly revolutionary way, i.e., war must be declared on the oil barons and shareholders, the confiscation of their property and punishment by imprisonment must be decreed for delaying nationalisation of the oil business, for concealing incomes or accounts, for sabotaging production, and for failing to take steps to increase production. The initiative of the workers and other employees must be drawn on; *they* must be immediately summoned to conferences and congresses; a certain proportion of the profits must be assigned to *them*, provided they institute overall control and increase production. Had these revolutionary-democratic steps been taken at once, immediately, in April 1917, Russia, which is one of the richest countries in the world in deposits of liquid fuel, could, using water transport, have done a very great deal during this summer to supply the people with the necessary quantities of fuel.

\* These lines had been written when I learnt from the newspapers that the Kerensky government is introducing a sugar monopoly, and, of course, is introducing it in a reactionary-bureaucratic way, without congresses of workers and other employees, without publicity, and without curbing the capitalists!

Neither the bourgeois nor the coalition Socialist-Revolutionary-Menshevik-Cadet government has done anything at all. Both have confined themselves to a bureaucratic playing at reforms. They have not dared to take a single revolutionary-democratic step. Everything has remained as it was under the tsars—the oil barons, the stagnation, the hatred of the workers and other employees for their exploiters, the resulting chaos, and the dissipation of national labour—only the *letterheads* on the incoming and outgoing papers in the “republican” offices have been changed!

Take the coal industry. It is technically and culturally no less “ripe” for nationalisation, and is being no less shamelessly managed by the robbers of the people, the coal barons, and there are a number of most striking *facts* of direct sabotage, direct *damage* to and stoppage of production by the industrialists. Even the ministerial *Rabochaya Gazeta* of the Mensheviks has admitted these facts. And what do we find? Absolutely nothing has been done, except to call the old, reactionary-bureaucratic meetings “on a half-and-half basis”—an equal number of workers and bandits from the coal syndicate! Not a single revolutionary-democratic step has been taken, not a shadow of an attempt has been made to establish the only control which is real—control from *below*, through the employees’ union, through the workers, and by using terror against the coal industrialists who are ruining the country and bringing production to a standstill! How can this be done when we are “all” in favour of the “coalition”—if not with the Cadets, then with commercial and industrial circles. And coalition means leaving power in the hands of the capitalists, letting them go unpunished, allowing them to hamper affairs, to blame everything on the workers, to intensify the chaos and *thus* pave the way for a new Kornilov revolt!

## ABOLITION OF COMMERCIAL SECRECY

Unless commercial secrecy is abolished, either control over production and distribution will remain an empty promise, only needed by the Cadets to fool the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks to fool the working classes, or control can be exercised only by reactionary-bureaucratic methods and means. Although this is obvious to every unprejudiced person, and although *Pravda* persistently demanded the abolition of commercial secrecy\* (and was suppressed largely for this reason by the Kerensky government which is subservient to capital), neither our republican govern-

---

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 521-22, and Vol. 25, pp. 139-43.—Ed

ment nor the "authorised bodies of revolutionary democracy" have even thought of this *first step* to real control.

This is the very key to all control. Here we have the most sensitive spot of capital, which is robbing the people and sabotaging production. And this is exactly why the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are afraid to do anything about it.

The usual argument of the capitalists, one reiterated by the petty bourgeoisie without reflection, is that in a capitalist economy the abolition of commercial secrecy is in general absolutely impossible, for private ownership of the means of production, and the dependence of the individual undertakings on the market render essential the "sanctity" of commercial books and commercial operations, including, of course, banking operations.

Those who in one form or another repeat this or similar arguments allow themselves to be deceived and themselves deceive the people by shutting their eyes to two fundamental, highly important and generally known facts of modern economic activity. The first fact is the existence of large-scale capitalism, i.e., the peculiar features of the economic system of banks, syndicates, large factories, etc. The second fact is the war.

It is modern large-scale capitalism, which is everywhere becoming monopoly capitalism, that deprives commercial secrecy of every shadow of reasonableness, turns it into hypocrisy and into an instrument exclusively for concealing financial swindles and the fantastically high profits of big capital. Large-scale capitalist economy, by its very technical nature, is socialised economy, that is, it both operates for millions of people and, directly or indirectly, unites by its operations hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of families. It is not like the economy of the small handicraftsman or the middle peasant who keep no commercial books at all and who would therefore not be affected by the abolition of commercial secrecy!

As it is, the operations conducted in large-scale business are known to hundreds or more persons. Here the law protecting commercial secrecy does not serve the interests of production or exchange, but those of speculation and profit-seeking in their crudest form, and of direct fraud, which, as we know, in the case of joint stock companies is particularly widespread and very skilfully concealed by reports and balance-sheets, so compiled as to deceive the public.

While commercial secrecy is unavoidable in small commodity production, i.e., among the small peasants and handicraftsmen, where production itself is not socialised but scattered and disunited, in large-scale capitalist production, the protection of commercial secrecy means protection of the privileges and profits of literally a handful of people *against* the interest of the whole

people. This has already been recognised by the law, inasmuch as provision is made for the publication of the accounts of joint-stock companies. But *this* control, which has already been introduced in all advanced countries, as well as in Russia, is a reactionary-bureaucratic control which does not open the eyes of the *people* and which *does not allow the whole truth* about the operations of joint-stock companies to become known.

To act in a revolutionary-democratic way, it would be necessary to immediately pass another law abolishing commercial secrecy, compelling the big undertakings and the wealthy to render the fullest possible accounts, and investing every group of citizens of substantial democratic numerical strength (1,000 or 10,000 voters, let us say) with the right to examine *all* the records of any large undertaking. Such a measure could be fully and easily effected by a simple decree. It *alone* would allow full scope for *popular* initiative in control, through the office employees' unions, the workers' unions and all the political parties, and it alone would make control effective and democratic.

Add to this the war. The vast majority of commercial and industrial establishments are now working not for the "free market", but *for the government*, for the war. This is why I have already stated in *Pravda* that people who counter us with the argument that socialism cannot be introduced are liars, and bare-faced liars at that, because it is not a question of introducing socialism now, directly, overnight, but of *exposing plunder of the state*.\*

Capitalist "war" economy (i.e., economy directly or indirectly connected with war contracts) is systematic and legalised *plunder*, and the Cadet gentry, who, together with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, are opposing the abolition of commercial secrecy, are nothing but *aiders and abettors of plunder*.

The war is now costing Russia fifty million rubles *a day*. These fifty million go mostly to army contractors. Of these fifty, at least five million *daily*, and probably ten million or more, constitute the "honest income" of the capitalists, and of the officials who are in one way or another in collusion with them. The very large firms and banks which lend money for war contracts transactions thereby make fantastic profits, and do so by plundering the state, for no other epithet can be applied to this defrauding and plundering of the people "on the occasion of" the hardships of war, "on the occasion of" the deaths of hundreds of thousands and millions of people.

"Everybody" knows about these scandalous profits made on war contracts, about the "letters of guarantee" which are concealed

by the banks, about who benefits by the rising cost of living. It is smiled on in "society". Quite a number of precise references are made to it *even* in the bourgeois press, which as a general rule keeps silent about "unpleasant" facts and avoids "ticklish" questions. Everybody knows about it, yet everybody keeps silent, everybody tolerates it, everybody puts up with the government, which prates eloquently about "control" and "regulation"!!

The revolutionary democrats, were they real revolutionaries and democrats, would immediately pass a law abolishing commercial secrecy, compelling contractors and merchants to render accounts public, forbidding them to abandon their field of activity without the permission of the authorities, imposing the penalty of confiscation of property and shooting\* for concealment and for deceiving the people, organising verification and control *from below*, democratically, by the people themselves, by unions of workers and other employees, consumers, etc.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fully deserve to be called scared democrats, for on this question they repeat what is said by all the scared philistines, namely, that the capitalists will "run away" if "too severe" measures are adopted, that "we" shall be unable to get along without the capitalists, that the British and French millionaires, who are, of course, "supporting" us, will most likely be "offended" in their turn, and so on. It might be thought that the Bolsheviks were proposing something unknown to history, something that has never been tried before, something "utopian", while, as a matter of fact, even 125 years ago, in France, people who were real "revolutionary democrats", who were really convinced of the just and defensive character of the war they were waging, who really had popular support and were sincerely convinced of this, were able to establish *revolutionary* control over the rich and to achieve results which earned the admiration of the world. And in the century and a quarter that have since elapsed, the development of capitalism, which resulted in the creation of banks, syndicates, railways and so forth, has greatly facilitated and simplified the adoption of measures of really democratic control by the workers and peasants over the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists.

In point of fact, the whole question of control boils down to who controls whom, i.e., which class is in control and which is being

---

I have already had occasion to point out in the Bolshevik press that it is right to argue against the death penalty only when it is applied by the exploiters against the *mass* of the working people with the purpose of maintaining exploitation. (See *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 261-64.—*Ed.*) It is hardly likely that any revolutionary government whatever could do without applying the death penalty to the *exploiters* (i.e., the landowners and capitalists).

controlled. In our country, in republican Russia, with the help of the "authorised bodies" of supposedly revolutionary democracy, it is the landowners and capitalists who are still recognised to be, and still are, the controllers. The inevitable result is the capitalist robbery that arouses universal indignation among the people, and the economic chaos that is being artificially kept up by the capitalists. We must resolutely and irrevocably, not fearing to break with the old, not fearing boldly to build the new, pass to control *over* the landowners and capitalists *by* the workers and peasants. And this is what our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fear worse than the plague.

## COMPULSORY ASSOCIATION

Compulsory syndication, i.e., compulsory association, of the industrialists, for example, is already being practised in Germany. Nor is there anything new in it. Here, too, through the fault of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, we see the utter stagnation of republican Russia, whom these none-too-respectable parties "entertain" by dancing a quadrille with the Cadets, or with the Bublikovs, or with Tereshchenko and Kerensky.

Compulsory syndication is, on the one hand, a means whereby the state, as it were, expedites capitalist development, which everywhere leads to the organisation of the class struggle and to a growth in the number, variety and importance of unions. On the other hand, compulsory "unionisation" is an indispensable precondition for any kind of effective control and for all economy of national labour.

The German law, for instance, binds the leather manufacturers of a given locality or of the whole country to form an association, on the board of which there is a representative of the state for the purpose of control. A law of this kind does not directly, i.e., in itself, affect property relations in any way; it does not deprive any owner of a single kopek and does not predetermine whether the control is to be exercised in a reactionary-bureaucratic or a revolutionary-democratic form, direction or spirit.

Such laws can and should be passed in our country immediately, without wasting a single week of precious time; it should be left to *social conditions themselves* to determine the more specific forms of enforcing the law, the speed with which it is to be enforced, the methods of supervision over its enforcement, etc. In this case, the state requires no special machinery, no special investigation, nor preliminary enquiries for the passing of such a law. All that is required is the determination to break with certain private interests of the capitalists, who are "not accustomed"

to such interference and have no desire to forfeit the super-profits which are ensured by the old methods of management and the absence of control.

No machinery and no "statistics" (which Chernov wanted to substitute for the revolutionary initiative of the peasants) are required to *pass* such a law, inasmuch as its implementation must be made the duty of the manufacturers or industrialists themselves, of the *available* public forces, under the control of the available public (i.e., non-government, non-bureaucratic) forces too, which, however, must consist by all means of the so-called "lower estates", i.e., of the oppressed and exploited classes, which in history have always proved to be immensely *superior* to the exploiters in their capacity for heroism, self-sacrifice and comradely discipline.

Let us assume that we have a really revolutionary-democratic government and that it decides that the manufacturers and industrialists in every branch of production who employ, let us say, not less than two workers shall immediately amalgamate into *uyezd* and gubernia associations. Responsibility for the strict observance of the law is laid in the first place on the manufacturers, directors, board members, and big shareholders (for they are the real leaders of modern industry, its real masters). They shall be regarded as deserters from military service, and punished as such, if they do not work for the immediate implementation of the law, and shall bear mutual responsibility, one answering for all, and all for one, with the whole of their property. Responsibility shall next be laid on all office employees, who shall also form *one* union, and on all workers and their trade union. The purpose of "unionisation" is to institute the fullest, strictest and most detailed accountancy, but chiefly to *combine operations* in the purchase of raw materials, the sale of products, and the *economy* of national funds and forces. When the separate establishments are amalgamated into a single syndicate, this economy can attain tremendous proportions, as economic science teaches us and as is shown by the example of all syndicates, cartels and trusts. And it must be repeated that this unionisation will not in itself alter property relations one iota and will not deprive any owner of a single kopek. This circumstance must be strongly stressed, for the bourgeois press constantly "frightens" small and medium proprietors by asserting that socialists in general, and the Bolsheviks in particular, want to "expropriate" them—a deliberately false assertion, as socialists do not intend to, cannot and will not expropriate the small peasant *even if there is a fully socialist* revolution. All the time we are speaking *only* of the immediate and urgent measures, which have already been introduced in Western Europe and which a democracy that is at all consistent



ought to introduce immediately in our country to combat the impending and inevitable catastrophe.

Serious difficulties, both technical and cultural, would be encountered in amalgamating the small and very small proprietors into associations, owing to the extremely small proportions and technical primitiveness of their enterprises and the illiteracy or lack of education of the owners. But precisely such enterprises could be exempted from the law (as was pointed out above in our hypothetical example). Their non-amalgamation, let alone their belated amalgamation, could create no serious obstacle, for the part played by the huge number of small enterprises in the sum total of production and their importance to the economy as a whole are *negligible*, and, moreover, they are often in one way or another dependent on the big enterprises.

Only the big enterprises are of decisive importance; and here the technical and cultural means and forces for "unionisation" *do exist*; what is lacking is the firm, determined initiative of a *revolutionary* government which should be ruthlessly severe towards the exploiters to set these forces and means in motion.

The poorer a country is in technically trained forces, and in intellectual forces generally, the more *urgent* it is to decree compulsory association as early and as resolutely as possible and to begin with the bigger and biggest enterprises when putting the decree into effect, for it is association that will *economise* intellectual forces and make it possible to use them *to the full* and to distribute them more correctly. If, after 1905, even the Russian peasants in their out-of-the-way districts, under the tsarist government, in face of the thousands of obstacles raised by that government, were able to make a tremendous forward stride in the creation of all kinds of associations, it is clear that the amalgamation of large- and medium-scale industry and trade could be effected in several months, if not earlier, provided compulsion to this end were exercised by a really revolutionary-democratic government relying on the support, participation, interest and advantage of the "lower ranks", the democracy, the workers and other employees, and calling upon *them* to exercise control.

## REGULATION OF CONSUMPTION

The war has compelled all the belligerent and many of the neutral countries to resort to the regulation of consumption. Bread cards have been issued and have become customary, and this has led to the appearance of other ration cards. Russia is no exception and has also introduced bread cards.

Using this as an example, we can draw, perhaps, the most striking comparison of all between reactionary-bureaucratic methods

of combating a catastrophe, which are confined to minimum reforms, and revolutionary-democratic methods, which, to justify their name, must directly aim at a violent rupture with the old, obsolete system and at the achievement of the speediest possible progress.

The bread card—this typical example of how consumption is regulated in modern capitalist countries—aims at, and achieves (at best), one thing only, namely, distributing available supplies of grain to give everybody his share. A maximum limit to consumption is established, not for all foodstuffs by far, but only for principal foodstuffs, those of “popular” consumption. And that is all. There is no intention of doing anything else. Available supplies of grain are calculated in a bureaucratic way, then divided on a per capita basis, a ration is fixed and introduced, and there the matter ends. Luxury articles are not affected, for they are “anyway” scarce and “anyway” so dear as to be beyond the reach of the “people”. And so, in *all* the belligerent countries without exception, *even* in Germany, which evidently, without fear of contradiction, may be said to be a model of the most careful, pedantic and strict regulation of consumption—*even* in Germany we find that the rich constantly *get around* all “rationing”. This, too, “everybody” knows and “everybody” talks about with a smile; and in the German socialist papers, and sometimes even in the bourgeois papers, despite the fierce military stringency of the German censorship, we constantly find items and reports about the “menus” of the rich, saying how the wealthy can obtain white bread in any quantity at a certain health resort (visited, on the plea of illness, by everybody who has plenty of money), and how the wealthy substitute choice and rare articles of luxury for articles of popular consumption.

A reactionary capitalist state which *fears* to undermine the pillars of capitalism, of wage slavery, of the economic supremacy of the rich, which *fears* to encourage the initiative of the workers and the working people generally, which *fears* to provoke them to a more exacting attitude—*such* a state will be quite content with bread cards. Such a state does not for a moment, in any measure it adopts, lose sight of the *reactionary* aim of strengthening capitalism, preventing its being undermined, and confining the “regulation of economic life” in general, and the regulation of consumption in particular, to such measures as are absolutely essential to feed the people, *and makes no attempt* whatsoever at real regulation of consumption by exercising *control over the rich* and laying the *greater part* of the burden in war-time on those who are better off, who are privileged, well fed and overfed in peace-time.

The reactionary-bureaucratic solution of the problem with

which the war has confronted the peoples confines itself to bread cards, to the equal distribution of "popular" foodstuffs, of those absolutely essential to feed the people, without retreating one little bit from bureaucratic and reactionary ideas, that is, from the aim of *not* encouraging the initiative of the poor, the proletariat, the mass of the people ("demos"), of *not* allowing *them* to exercise control over the rich, and of leaving *as many* loopholes *as possible* for the rich to compensate themselves with articles of luxury. And a great number of loopholes are left in *all* countries, we repeat, even in Germany—not to speak of Russia; the "common people" starve while the rich visit health resorts, supplement the meagre official ration by all sorts of "extras" obtained on the side, and do *not* allow *themselves* to be controlled.

In Russia, which has only just made a revolution against the tsarist regime in the name of liberty and equality in Russia, which, as far as its actual political institutions are concerned, has at once become a democratic republic, what particularly strikes the people, what particularly arouses popular discontent, irritation, anger and indignation is that *everybody* sees the easy way in which the wealthy get around the bread cards. They do it very easily indeed. "From under the counter", and for a very high price, especially if one has "*pull*" (which only the rich have), one can obtain anything, and in large quantities, too. It is the people who are starving. The regulation of consumption is confined within the narrowest bureaucratic-reactionary limits. The government has not the slightest intention of putting regulation on a really revolutionary-democratic footing, is not in the least concerned about doing so.

"Everybody" is suffering from the queues but—but the rich send their servants to stand in the queues, and even engage special servants for the purpose! And that is "democracy"!

At a time when the country is suffering untold calamities, a revolutionary-democratic policy would not confine itself to bread cards to combat the impending catastrophe but would add, firstly, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' societies, for otherwise control over consumption cannot be fully exercised; secondly, labour service for the rich, making them perform without pay secretarial and similar duties for these consumers' societies; thirdly, the equal distribution among the population of absolutely all consumer goods, so as really to distribute the burdens of the war equitably; fourthly, the organisation of control in such a way as to have the poorer classes of the population exercise control over the consumption of the rich.

The establishment of real democracy in this sphere and the display of a real revolutionary spirit in the organisation of con-

trol by the most needy classes of the people would be a very great stimulus to the employment of all available intellectual forces and to the development of the truly revolutionary energies of the entire people. Yet now the ministers of republican and revolutionary-democratic Russia, exactly like their colleagues in all other imperialist countries, make pompous speeches about "working in common for the good of the people" and about "exerting every effort", but the people see, feel and sense the hypocrisy of this talk.

The result is that no progress is being made, chaos is spreading irresistibly, and a catastrophe is approaching, for our government cannot introduce war-time penal servitude for the workers in the Kornilov, Hindenburg, general imperialist way—the traditions, memories, vestiges, habits and institutions of the *revolution* are still too much alive among the people; our government does not want to take any really serious steps in a revolutionary-democratic direction, for it is thoroughly infected and thoroughly enmeshed by its dependence on the bourgeoisie, its "coalition" with the bourgeoisie, and its fear to encroach on their real privileges.

## GOVERNMENT DISRUPTION OF THE WORK OF THE DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATIONS

We have examined various ways and means of combating catastrophe and famine. We have seen everywhere that the contradictions between the democrats, on the one hand, and the government and the bloc of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks which is supporting it, on the other, are irreconcilable. To prove that these contradictions exist in reality, and not merely in our exposition, and that their irreconcilability is *actually* borne out by conflicts affecting the people as a whole, we have only to recall two very typical "results" and lessons of the six months' history of our revolution.

The history of the "reign" of Palchinsky is one lesson. The history of the "reign" and fall of Peshekhonov is the other.

The measures to combat catastrophe and hunger described above boil down to the all-round encouragement (even to the extent of compulsion) of "unionisation" of the population, and primarily the democrats, i.e., the majority of the population, or, above all, the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, especially the poor peasants. And this is the path which the population itself spontaneously began to adopt in order to cope with the unparalleled difficulties, burdens and hardships of the war.

Tsarism did everything to hamper the free and independent "unionisation" of the population. But after the fall of the tsarist monarchy, democratic organisations began to spring up and grow

rapidly all over Russia. The struggle against the catastrophe began to be waged by spontaneously arising democratic organisations—by all sorts of committees of supply, food committees, fuel councils, and so on and so forth.

And the most remarkable thing in the whole six months' history of our revolution, as far as the question we are examining is concerned, is that a *government* which calls itself republican and revolutionary, and which is *supported* by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries in the name of the "authorised bodies of revolutionary democracy", *fought* the democratic organisations and *defeated them*!!

By this fight, Palchinsky earned extremely wide and very sad notoriety all over Russia. He acted behind the government's back, without coming out publicly (just as the Cadets generally preferred to act, willingly pushing forward Tsereteli "for the people", while they themselves arranged all the important business on the quiet). Palchinsky hampered and thwarted every serious measure taken by the spontaneously created democratic organisations, for no serious measure could be taken without "injuring" the excessive profits and willfulness of the Kit Kityches. And Palchinsky was in fact a loyal defender and servant of the Kit Kityches. Palchinsky went so far—and this fact was reported in the newspapers—as simply to *annul* the orders of the spontaneously created democratic organisations!

The whole history of Palchinsky's "reign"—and he "reigned" for many months, and just when Tsereteli, Skobelev and Chernov were "ministers"—was a monstrous scandal from beginning to end; the will of the people and the decisions of the democrats were frustrated to *please* the capitalists and meet their filthy greed. Of course, only a negligible part of Palchinsky's "feats" could find its way into the press, and a full investigation of the manner in which he *hindered* the struggle against famine can be made only by a truly democratic government of the proletariat when it gains power and submits all the actions of Palchinsky and his like, without concealing anything, *to the judgement* of the people.

It will perhaps be argued that Palchinsky was an exception, and that after all he was removed. But the fact is that Palchinsky was not the exception but the *rule*, that the situation has in no way improved with his removal, that his place has been taken by the same kind of Palchinskys with different names, and that all the "*influence*" of the capitalists, and the entire policy of *frustrating the struggle against hunger to please the capitalists*, has remained intact. For Kerensky and Co. are only a screen for defence of the interests of the capitalists.

The most striking proof of this is the resignation of Peshekhonov, the Food Minister. As we know, Peshekhonov is a very, very mod-

erate Narodnik. But in the organisation of food supply he wanted to work honestly, in contact with and supported by the democratic organisations. The *experience* of Peshekhonov's work and his *resignation* are all the more interesting because this extremely moderate Narodnik, this member of the Popular Socialist Party, who was ready to accept any compromise with the bourgeoisie, was nevertheless compelled to resign! For the Kerensky government, to please the capitalists, landowners and kulaks, had *raised* the fixed prices of grain!

This is how M. Smith describes this "step" and its significance in the newspaper *Svobodnaya Zhizn*<sup>121</sup> No. 1, of September 2:

"Several days before the government decided to raise the fixed prices, the following scene was enacted in the national Food Committee: Rolovich, a Right-winger, a stubborn defender of the interests of private trade and a ruthless opponent of the grain monopoly and state interference in economic affairs, publicly announced with a smug smile that he understood the fixed grain prices would shortly be raised.

"The representative of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies replied by declaring that he knew nothing of the kind, that as long as the revolution in Russia lasted such an act could not take place, and that at any rate the government could not take such a step without first consulting the authorised democratic bodies—the Economic Council and the national Food Committee. This statement was supported by the representative of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies.

"But, alas, reality introduced a very harsh amendment to this counter-version! It was the representative of the wealthy elements and not the representatives of the democrats who turned out to be right. He proved to be excellently informed of the preparations for an attack on democratic rights, although the democratic representatives indignantly denied the very possibility of such an attack."

And so, both the representative of the workers and the representative of the peasants explicitly state their opinion in the name of the vast majority of the people, yet the Kerensky government acts contrary to that opinion, in the interests of the capitalists!

Rolovich, a representative of the capitalists, turned out to be excellently informed behind the backs of the democrats—just as we have always observed, and now observe, that the bourgeois newspapers, *Rech* and *Birzhevka*, are best informed of the doings in the Kerensky government.

What does this possession of excellent information show? Obviously, that the capitalists have their "channels" and *virtually* hold power in their own hands. Kerensky is a figurehead which they use as and when they find necessary. The interests of tens of millions of workers and peasants turn out to have been sacrificed to the profits of a handful of the rich.

And how do our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks react to this outrage to the people? Did they address an appeal to the workers and peasants, saying that after this, prison was the only place for Kerensky and his colleagues?

God forbid! The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, through their Economic Department, confined themselves to adopting the impressive resolution to which we have already referred! In this resolution they declare that the raising of grain prices by the Kerensky government is "a *ruinous* measure which deals a *severe blow* both at the food supply and at the whole economic life of the country", and that these ruinous measures have been taken in direct "*violation*" of the law!!

Such are the results of the policy of compromise, of flirting with Kerensky and desiring to "spare" him!

The government violates the law by adopting, in the interests of the rich, the landowners and capitalists, a measure which *ruins* the whole business of control, food supply and the stabilisation of the extremely shaky finances, yet the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks continue to talk about an understanding with commercial and industrial circles, continue to attend conferences with Tereshchenko and to spare Kerensky, and confine themselves to a paper resolution of protest, which the government very calmly pigeonholes!!

This reveals with great clarity the fact that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the people and the revolution, and that the Bolsheviks are becoming the real leaders of the masses, *even* of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik masses.

For only the winning of power by the proletariat, headed by the Bolshevik Party, can put an end to the outrageous actions of Kerensky and Co. and *restore* the work of democratic food distribution, supply and other organisations, which Kerensky and his government are *frustrating*.

The Bolsheviks are acting—and this can be very clearly seen from the above example—as the representatives of the interests of the *whole* people, which are to ensure food distribution and supply and meet the most urgent needs of the workers and *peasants*, despite the vacillating, irresolute and truly treacherous policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, a policy which has brought the country to an act as shameful as this raising of grain prices!

## FINANCIAL COLLAPSE AND MEASURES TO COMBAT IT

There is another side to the problem of raising the fixed grain prices. This raising of prices involves a new chaotic increase in the issuing of paper money, a further increase in the cost of living, increased financial disorganisation and the approach of financial

collapse. Everybody admits that the issuing of paper money constitutes the worst form of compulsory loan, that it most of all affects the conditions of the workers, of the poorest section of the population, and that it is the chief evil engendered by financial disorder.

And it is to this measure that the Kerensky government, supported by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, is resorting!

There is no way of effectively combating financial disorganisation and inevitable financial collapse except that of revolutionary rupture with the interests of capital and that of the organisation of really democratic control, i.e., control from "below", control by the workers and the poor peasants *over* the capitalists, a way to which we referred throughout the earlier part of this exposition.

Large issues of paper money encourage profiteering, enable the capitalists to make millions of rubles, and place tremendous difficulties in the way of a very necessary expansion of production, for the already high cost of materials, machinery, etc., is rising further by leaps and bounds. What can be done about it when the wealth acquired by the rich through profiteering is being concealed?

An income tax with progressive and very high rates for larger and very large incomes might be introduced. Our government has introduced one, following the example of other imperialist governments. But it is largely a fiction, a dead letter, for, firstly, the value of money is falling faster and faster, and, secondly, the more incomes are derived from profiteering and the more securely commercial secrecy is maintained, the greater their concealment.

Real and not nominal control is required to make the tax real and not fictitious. But control over the capitalists is impossible if it remains bureaucratic, for the bureaucracy is itself bound to and interwoven with the bourgeoisie by thousands of threads. That is why in the West-European imperialist states, monarchies and republics alike, financial order is obtained solely by the introduction of "labour service", which creates *war-time penal servitude* or *war-time slavery* for the workers.

Reactionary-bureaucratic control is the only method known to imperialist states—not excluding the democratic republics of France and America—of foisting the burdens of the war on to the proletariat and the working people.

The basic contradiction in the policy of our government is that, in order not to quarrel with the bourgeoisie, not to destroy the "coalition" with them, the government has to introduce reactionary-bureaucratic control, which it calls "revolutionary-democratic"



control, deceiving the people at every step and irritating and angering the masses who have just overthrown tsarism.

Yet only revolutionary-democratic measures, only the organisation of the oppressed classes, the workers and peasants, the masses, into unions would make it possible to establish a most effective control *over the rich* and wage a most successful fight against the concealment of incomes.

An attempt is being made to encourage the use of cheques as a means of avoiding excessive issue of paper money. This measure is of no significance as far as the poor are concerned, for anyway they live from hand to mouth, complete their "economic cycle" in one week and return to the capitalists the few meagre coppers they manage to earn. The use of cheques might have great significance as far as the rich are concerned. It would enable the state, especially in conjunction with such measures as nationalisation of the banks and abolition of commercial secrecy, *really to control* the incomes of the capitalists, *really to impose* taxation on them, and *really to "democratise"* (and at the same time bring order into) the financial system.

But this is hampered by the fear of infringing the privileges of the bourgeoisie and destroying the "coalition" with them. For unless truly revolutionary measures are adopted and compulsion is very seriously resorted to, the capitalists will not submit to any control, will not make known their budgets, and will not surrender their stocks of paper money for the democratic state to "keep account" of.

The workers and peasants, organised in unions, by nationalising the banks, making the use of cheques legally compulsory for all rich persons, abolishing commercial secrecy, imposing confiscation of property as a penalty for concealment of incomes, etc., might with extreme ease make control both effective and universal—control, that is, over the rich, and such control as would *secure the return* of paper money *from those* who have it, *from those* who conceal it, *to the treasury*, which issues it.

This requires a revolutionary dictatorship of the democracy, headed by the revolutionary proletariat; that is, it requires that the democracy should become revolutionary *in fact*. That is the crux of the matter. But that is just what is not wanted by our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who are deceiving the people by displaying the *flag* of "revolutionary democracy" while they are in fact supporting the reactionary-bureaucratic policy of the bourgeoisie, who, as always, are guided by the rule: "*Après nous le déluge*"—after us the deluge!

We usually do not even notice how thoroughly we are permeated by anti-democratic habits and prejudices regarding the "sanctity" of bourgeois property. When an engineer or banker publishes

the income and expenditure of a worker, information about his wages and the productivity of his labour, this is regarded as absolutely legitimate and fair. Nobody thinks of seeing it as an intrusion into the "private life" of the worker, as "spying or informing" on the part of the engineer. Bourgeois society regards the labour and earnings of a wage-worker as *its* open book, any bourgeois being entitled to peer into it at any moment, and at any moment to expose the "luxurious living" of the worker, his supposed "laziness", etc.

Well, and what about reverse control? What if the unions of employees, clerks and *domestic servants* were invited by a *democratic* state to verify the income and expenditure of capitalists, to publish information on the subject and to assist the government in combating concealment of incomes?

What a furious howl against "spying" and "informing" would be raised by the bourgeoisie! When "masters" control servants, or when capitalists control workers, this is considered to be in the nature of things; the private life of the working and exploited people is *not* considered inviolable. The bourgeoisie are entitled to call to account any "wage slave" and at any time to make public his income and expenditure. But if the oppressed attempt to control the oppressor, to show up *his* income and expenditure, to expose *his* luxurious living even in war-time, when his luxurious living is directly responsible for armies at the front starving and perishing—oh, no, the bourgeoisie will not tolerate "spying" and "informing"!

It all boils down to the same thing: the rule of the bourgeoisie is *irreconcilable* with truly-revolutionary true democracy. We cannot be revolutionary democrats in the twentieth century and in a capitalist country *if we fear* to advance towards socialism.

### CAN WE GO FORWARD IF WE FEAR TO ADVANCE TOWARDS SOCIALISM?

What has been said so far may easily arouse the following objection on the part of a reader who has been brought up on the current opportunist ideas of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Most measures described here, he may say, are *already* in effect socialist and not democratic measures!

This current objection, one that is usually raised (in one form or another) in the bourgeois, Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press, is a reactionary defence of backward capitalism, a defence decked out in a Struvean garb. It seems to say that we are not ripe for socialism, that it is too early to "introduce" socialism, that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution and therefore we must be the menials of the bourgeoisie (although the great

bourgeois revolutionaries in France 125 years ago made their revolution a great revolution by exercising *terror* against all oppressors, landowners and capitalists alike!).

The pseudo-Marxist lackeys of the bourgeoisie, who have been joined by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and who argue in this way, do not understand (as an examination of the theoretical basis of their opinion shows) what imperialism is, what capitalist monopoly is, what the state is, and what revolutionary democracy is. For anyone who understands this is bound to admit that there can be no advance except towards socialism.

Everybody talks about imperialism. But imperialism is merely monopoly capitalism.

That capitalism in Russia has also become monopoly capitalism is sufficiently attested by the examples of the Produgol, the Prodamet, the Sugar Syndicate, etc. This Sugar Syndicate is an object-lesson in the way monopoly capitalism develops into state-monopoly capitalism.

And what is the state? It is an organisation of the ruling class—in Germany, for instance, of the Junkers and capitalists. And therefore what the German Plekhanovs (Scheidemann, Lensch, and others) call “war-time socialism” is in fact war-time state-monopoly capitalism, or, to put it more simply and clearly, war-time penal servitude for the workers and war-time protection for capitalist profits.

Now try to *substitute* for the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes *all* privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way. You will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

For if a huge capitalist undertaking becomes a monopoly, it means that it serves the whole nation. If it has become a state monopoly, it means that the state (i.e., the armed organisation of the population, the workers and peasants above all, provided there is *revolutionary* democracy) directs the whole undertaking. In whose interest?

Either in the interest of the landowners and capitalists, in which case we have not a revolutionary-democratic, but a reactionary-bureaucratic state, an imperialist republic.

Or in the interest of revolutionary democracy—and then *it is a step towards socialism*.

For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent *ceased* to be capitalist monopoly.

There is no middle course here. The objective process of development is such that it is *impossible* to advance from *monopolies* (and the war has magnified their number, role and importance tenfold) without advancing towards socialism.

Either we have to be revolutionary democrats in fact, in which case we must not fear to take steps towards socialism. Or we fear to take steps towards socialism, condemn them in the Plekhanov, Dan or Chernov way, by arguing that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution, that socialism cannot be "introduced", etc., in which case we inevitably sink to the level of Kerensky, Milyukov and Kornilov, i.e., we in a *reactionary-bureaucratic* way suppress the "revolutionary-democratic" aspirations of the workers and peasants.

There is no middle course.

And therein lies the fundamental contradiction of our revolution.

It is impossible to stand still in history in general, and in war-time in particular. We must either advance or retreat. It is *impossible* in twentieth-century Russia, which has won a republic and democracy in a revolutionary way, to go forward without *advancing* towards socialism, without taking *steps* towards it (steps conditioned and determined by the level of technology and culture: large-scale machine production cannot be "introduced" in peasant agriculture nor abolished in the sugar industry).

But to fear to advance *means* retreating—which the Kerenskys, to the delight of the Milyukovs and Plekhanovs, and with the foolish assistance of the Teretelis and Chernovs, are actually doing.

The dialectics of history is such that the war, by extraordinarily expediting the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism, has *thereby* extraordinarily advanced mankind towards socialism.

Imperialist war is the eve of socialist revolution. And this not only because the horrors of the war give rise to proletarian revolt—no revolt can bring about socialism unless the economic conditions for socialism are ripe—but because state-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*.

\* \* \*

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks approach the question of socialism in a doctrinaire way, from the standpoint of a doctrine learnt by heart but poorly understood. They picture socialism as some remote, unknown and dim future.

But socialism is now gazing at us from all the windows of modern capitalism; socialism is outlined directly, *practically*, by every important measure that constitutes a forward step on the basis of this modern capitalism.

What is universal labour conscription?

It is a step forward on the basis of modern monopoly capitalism, a step towards the regulation of economic life as a whole, in accordance with a certain general plan, a step towards the economy of national labour and towards the prevention of its senseless wastage by capitalism.

In Germany it is the Junkers (landowners) and capitalists who are introducing universal labour conscription, and therefore it inevitably becomes war-time penal servitude for the workers.

But take the same institution and think over its significance in a revolutionary-democratic state. Universal labour conscription, introduced, regulated and directed by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, will *still not* be socialism, but it will *no longer* be capitalism. It will be a tremendous *step towards* socialism, a step from which, if complete democracy is preserved, there can no longer be any retreat back to capitalism, without unparalleled violence being committed against the masses.

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ECONOMIC CHAOS— AND THE WAR

A consideration of the measures to avert the impending catastrophe brings us to another supremely important question, namely, the connection between home and foreign policy, or, in other words, the relation between a war of conquest, an imperialist war, and a revolutionary, proletarian war, between a criminal predatory war and a just democratic war.

All the measures to avert catastrophe we have described would, as we have already stated, greatly enhance the defence potential, or, in other words, the military might of the country. That, on the one hand. On the other hand, these measures cannot be put into effect without turning the war of conquest into a just war, turning the war waged by the capitalists in the interests of the capitalists into a war waged by the proletariat in the interests of all the working and exploited people.

And, indeed, nationalisation of the banks and syndicates, taken in conjunction with the abolition of commercial secrecy and the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, would not only imply a tremendous saving of national labour, the possibility of economising forces and means, but would also imply an improvement in the conditions of the working *masses*, of the majority of

the population. As everybody knows, economic organisation is of decisive importance in modern warfare. Russia has enough grain, coal, oil and iron; in this respect, we are in a better position than any of the belligerent European countries. And given a struggle against economic chaos by the measures indicated above, enlisting popular initiative in this struggle, improving the people's conditions, and nationalising the banks and syndicates, Russia could use her revolution and her democracy to raise the whole country to an incomparably higher level of economic organisation.

If instead of the "coalition" with the bourgeoisie, which is hampering every measure of control and sabotaging production, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had in April effected the transfer of power to the Soviets and had directed their efforts not to playing at "ministerial leapfrog", not to bureaucratically occupying, side by side with the Cadets, ministerial, deputy-ministerial and similar posts, but to guiding the workers and peasants in *their* control *over* the capitalists, in their *war against* the capitalists, Russia would now be a country completely transformed economically, with the land in the hands of the peasants, and with the banks nationalised, i.e., would *to that extent* (and these are extremely important economic bases of modern life) be *superior* to all other capitalist countries.

The defence potential, the military might, of a country whose banks have been nationalised is *superior* to that of a country whose banks remain in private hands. The military might of a peasant country whose land is in the hands of peasant committees is *superior* to that of a country whose land is in the hands of landowners.

Reference is constantly being made to the heroic patriotism and the miracles of military valour performed by the French in 1792-93. But the material, historical-economic conditions which alone made such miracles possible are forgotten. The suppression of obsolete feudalism in a really revolutionary way, and the introduction throughout the country of a superior mode of production and free peasant land tenure, effected, moreover, with truly revolutionary-democratic speed, determination, energy and devotion—such were the material, economic conditions which with "miraculous" speed saved France by *regenerating* and *renovating* her economic foundation.

The example of France shows one thing, and one thing only, namely, that to render Russia capable of self-defence, to obtain in Russia, too, "miracles" of mass heroism, all that is obsolete must be swept away with "Jacobin" ruthlessness and Russia renovated and regenerated *economically*. And in the twentieth century this cannot be done merely by sweeping tsarism away (France

did not confine herself to this 125 years ago). It cannot be done even by the mere revolutionary abolition of the landed estates (we have not even done that, for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have betrayed the peasants), by the mere transfer of the land to the peasants. For we are living in the twentieth century, and mastery over the land *without mastery over the banks* cannot regenerate and renovate the life of the people.

The material, industrial renovation of France at the end of the eighteenth century was associated with a political and spiritual renovation, with the dictatorship of revolutionary democrats and the revolutionary proletariat (from which the democrats had not dissociated themselves and with which they were still almost fused), and with a ruthless war declared on everything reactionary. The whole people, and especially the masses, i.e., the *oppressed* classes, were swept up by boundless revolutionary enthusiasm; *everybody* considered the war a just war of defence, as it *actually was*. Revolutionary France was defending herself against reactionary monarchist Europe. It was not in 1792-93, but many years later, *after* the victory of reaction within the country, that the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Napoleon turned France's wars from defensive wars into wars of conquest.

And what about Russia? We continue to wage an imperialist war in the interests of the capitalists, in alliance with the imperialists and in accordance with the secret treaties the *tsar* concluded with the capitalists of Britain and other countries, promising the Russian capitalists in these treaties the spoliation of foreign lands, of Constantinople, Lvov, Armenia, etc.

The war will remain an unjust, reactionary and predatory war on Russia's part as long as she does not propose a just peace and does not break with imperialism. The social character of the war, its true meaning, is not determined by the position of the enemy troops (as the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks think, stooping to the vulgarity of an ignorant yokel). What determines this character is the *policy* of which the war is a continuation ("war is the continuation of politics"), the *class* that is waging the war, and the aims for which it is waging this war.

You cannot lead the people into a predatory war in accordance with secret treaties and expect them to be enthusiastic. The foremost class in revolutionary Russia, the proletariat, is becoming increasingly aware of the criminal character of the war, and not only have the bourgeoisie been unable to shatter this popular conviction, but, on the contrary, awareness of the criminal character of the war is growing. The proletariat of *both metropolitan cities* of Russia has definitely become internationalist!

How, then, can you expect mass enthusiasm for the war!

One is inseparable from the other—home policy is inseparable from foreign policy. The country cannot be made capable of self-defence without the supreme heroism of the people in boldly and resolutely carrying out great economic transformations. And it is impossible to arouse popular heroism without breaking with imperialism, without proposing a democratic peace to all nations, and without thus turning the war from a criminal war of conquest and plunder into a just, revolutionary war of defence.

Only a thorough and consistent break with the capitalists in both home and foreign policy can save our revolution and our country, which is gripped in the iron vice of imperialism.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY DEMOCRATS AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAT

To be really revolutionary, the democrats of Russia today must march in very close alliance with the proletariat, supporting it in its struggle as the only thoroughly revolutionary class.

Such is the conclusion prompted by an analysis of the means of combating an impending catastrophe of unparalleled dimensions.

The war has created such an immense crisis, has so strained the material and moral forces of the people, has dealt such blows at the entire modern social organisation that humanity must now choose between perishing or entrusting its fate to the most revolutionary class for the swiftest and most radical transition to a superior mode of production.

Owing to a number of historical causes—the greater backwardness of Russia, the unusual hardships brought upon her by the war, the utter rottenness of tsarism and the extreme tenacity of the traditions of 1905—the revolution broke out in Russia earlier than in other countries. The revolution has resulted in Russia catching up with the advanced countries in a few months, as far as her *political* system is concerned.

But that is not enough. The war is inexorable; it puts the alternative with ruthless severity: either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries *economically as well*.

That is possible, for we have before us the experience of a large number of advanced countries, the fruits of their technology and culture. We are receiving moral support from the war protest that is growing in Europe, from the atmosphere of the mounting world-wide workers' revolution. We are being inspired and encouraged by a revolutionary-democratic freedom which is extremely rare in time of imperialist war.



Perish or forge full steam ahead. That is the alternative put by history.

And the attitude of the proletariat to the peasants in such a situation confirms the old Bolshevik concept, correspondingly modifying it, that the peasants must be wrested from the influence of the bourgeoisie. That is the sole guarantee of salvation for the revolution.

And the peasants are the most numerous section of the entire petty-bourgeois mass.

Our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks have assumed the reactionary function of keeping the peasants under the influence of the bourgeoisie and leading them to a coalition with the bourgeoisie, and not with the proletariat.

The masses are learning rapidly from the experience of the revolution. And the reactionary policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks is meeting with failure: they have been beaten in the Soviets of both Petrograd and Moscow.<sup>122</sup> A "Left" opposition is growing in both petty-bourgeois-democratic parties. On September 10, 1917, a city conference of the Socialist-Revolutionaries held in Petrograd gave a two-thirds majority to the *Left* Socialist-Revolutionaries, who incline towards an alliance with the proletariat and reject an alliance (coalition) with the bourgeoisie.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks repeat a favourite bourgeois comparison—bourgeoisie and democracy. But, in essence, such a comparison is as meaningless as comparing pounds with yards.

There is such a thing as a democratic bourgeoisie, and there is such a thing as bourgeois democracy; one would have to be completely ignorant of both history and political economy to deny this.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks needed a false comparison to *conceal* the indisputable fact that between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand the *petty bourgeoisie*. By virtue of their economic class status, the latter inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are trying to draw the petty bourgeoisie into an alliance with the bourgeoisie. That is the whole meaning of their "coalition", of the coalition cabinet, and of the whole policy of Kerensky, a typical semi-Cadet. In the six months of the revolution this policy has suffered a complete fiasco.

The Cadets are full of malicious glee. The revolution, they say, has suffered a fiasco; the revolution has been *unable* to cope either with the war or with economic dislocation.

That is not true. It is the *Cadets*, and the *Socialist-Revolution-*

*aries and Mensheviks* who have suffered a fiasco, for this alliance has ruled Russia for six months, only to increase economic dislocation and confuse and aggravate the military situation.

The more complete the fiasco of the *alliance* of the bourgeoisie and the *Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks*, the sooner the people will *learn their lesson* and the more easily they will find the *correct* way out, namely, the alliance of the peasant poor, i.e., the majority of the peasants, and the proletariat.

September 10-14, 1917

Written from September 10 to 14  
(23 to 27) 1917

Published at the end of October  
1917 in pamphlet form by Priboi  
Publishers Petrograd

*Collected Works* Vol. 25  
pp. 319-65

---

## ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION

The key question of every revolution is undoubtedly the question of state power. Which class holds power decides everything. When *Dyelo Naroda*, the paper of the chief governing party in Russia, recently complained (No. 147) that, owing to the controversies over power, both the question of the Constituent Assembly and that of bread are being forgotten, the Socialist-Revolutionaries should have been answered, "Blame yourselves. For it is the wavering and indecision of *your* party that are mostly to blame for 'ministerial leapfrog', the interminable postponements of the Constituent Assembly, and the undermining by the capitalists of the planned and agreed measures of a grain monopoly and of providing the country with bread."

The question of power cannot be evaded or brushed aside, because it is the key question determining *everything* in a revolution's development, and in its foreign and domestic policies. It is an undisputed fact that our revolution has "wasted" six months in wavering over the system of power; it is a fact resulting from the wavering policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. In the long run, these parties' wavering policy was determined by the class position of the petty bourgeoisie, by their economic instability in the struggle between capital and labour.

The whole issue at present is whether the petty-bourgeois democrats have learned anything during these great, exceptionally eventful six months. If not, then the revolution is lost, and only a victorious uprising of the proletariat can save it. If they have learned something, the establishment of a stable, unwavering power must be begun immediately. Only if power is based, obviously and unconditionally, *on a majority* of the population can it be stable during a popular revolution, i.e., a revolution which rouses the people, the majority of the workers and peasants, to action. Up to now state power in Russia has *virtually*

remained in the hands of the *bourgeoisie*, who are compelled to make only particular concessions (only to begin withdrawing them the following day), to hand out promises (only to fail to carry them out), to search for all sorts of excuses to cover their domination (only to fool the people by a show of "honest coalition"), etc., etc. In words it claims to be a popular, democratic, revolutionary government, but in deeds it is an anti-popular, undemocratic, counter-revolutionary, bourgeois government. This is the contradiction which has existed so far and which has been a source of the complete instability and inconsistency of power, of that "ministerial leapfrog" in which the S.R.s and Mensheviks have been engaged with such unfortunate (for the people) enthusiasm.

In early June 1917 I told the All-Russia Congress of Soviets that either the Soviets would be dispersed and die an inglorious death, or all power must be transferred to them.\* The events of July and August very convincingly bore out these words. No matter what lies the lackeys of the bourgeoisie—Potresov, Plekhanov and others, who designate as "broadening the base" of power its virtual transfer to a tiny minority of the people, to the bourgeoisie, the exploiters—may resort to, only the power of the Soviets can be stable, obviously based on a majority of the people.

Only Soviet power could be stable and not be overthrown even in the stormiest moments of the stormiest revolution. Only this power could assure a continuous and broad development of the revolution, a peaceful struggle of parties within the Soviets. Until this power is created, there will inevitably be indecision, instability, vacillation, endless "crises of power", a constant farce of ministerial leapfrog, outbreaks on the Right and on the Left.

The slogan, "Power to the Soviets", however, is very often, if not in most cases, taken quite incorrectly to mean a "Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority". We would like to go into more detail on this very false notion.

A "Cabinet of the parties of the Soviet majority" means a change of individual ministers, with the entire old government apparatus left intact—a thoroughly bureaucratic and thoroughly undemocratic apparatus incapable of carrying out serious reforms, such as are contained even in the S.R. and Menshevik programmes.

"Power to the Soviets" means radically reshaping the entire old state apparatus, that bureaucratic apparatus which hampers everything democratic. It means removing this apparatus and substituting for it a new, popular one, i.e., a truly democratic

---

\* See pp. 117-18 of the present volume —Ed.

apparatus of Soviets, i.e., the organised and armed majority of the people—the workers, soldiers and peasants. It means allowing the majority of the people initiative and independence not only in the election of deputies, but also in state administration, in effecting reforms and various other changes.

To make this difference clearer and more comprehensible, it is worth recalling a valuable admission made some time ago by the paper of the governing party of the S.R.s, *Dyelo Naroda*. It wrote that *even* in those ministries which were in the hands of socialist Ministers (this was written during the notorious coalition with the Cadets, when some Mensheviks and S.R.s were ministers), the entire administrative apparatus had remained unchanged, and hampered work.

This is quite understandable. The entire history of the bourgeois-parliamentary, and also, to a considerable extent, of the bourgeois-constitutional, countries shows that a change of ministers means very little, for the real work of administration is in the hands of an enormous army of officials. This army, however, is undemocratic through and through, it is connected by thousands and millions of threads with the landowners and the bourgeoisie and is completely dependent on them. This army is surrounded by an atmosphere of bourgeois relations, and breathes nothing but this atmosphere. It is set in its ways, petrified, stagnant, and is powerless to break free of this atmosphere. It can only think, feel, or act in the old way. This army is bound by servility to rank, by certain privileges of "Civil" Service; the upper ranks of this army are, through the medium of shares and banks, entirely enslaved by finance capital, being to a certain extent its agent and a vehicle of its interests and influence.

It is the greatest delusion, the greatest self-deception, and a deception of the people, to attempt, by means of *this* state apparatus, to carry out such reforms as the abolition of landed estates without compensation, or the grain monopoly, etc. This apparatus *can* serve a republican bourgeoisie, creating a republic in the shape of a "monarchy without a monarch", like the French Third Republic, but it is absolutely incapable of carrying out reforms which would even seriously curtail or limit the rights of capital, the rights of "sacred private property", much less abolish those rights. That is why it always happens, under all sorts of "coalition" Cabinets that include "socialists", that these socialists, even when individuals among them are perfectly honest, in reality turn out to be either a useless ornament of or a screen for the bourgeois government, a sort of lightning conductor to divert the people's indignation from the government, a tool for the government to deceive the people. This was the case with Louis Blanc in 1848, and dozens of times in Britain and France, when social-

ists participated in Cabinets. This is also the case with the Chernovs and Tseretelis in 1917. So it has been and so it will be as long as the bourgeois system exists and as long as the old bourgeois, bureaucratic state apparatus remains intact.

The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are particularly valuable because they represent a new *type* of state apparatus, which is immeasurably higher, incomparably more democratic. The S.R.s and Mensheviks have done everything, the possible and the impossible, to turn the Soviets (particularly the Petrograd Soviet and the All-Russia Soviet, i.e., the Central Executive Committee) into useless talking shops which, under the guise of "control", merely adopted useless resolutions and suggestions which the government shelved with the most polite and kindly smile. The "fresh breeze" of the Kornilov affair, however, which promised a real storm, was enough for all that was musty in the Soviet to blow away for a while, and for the initiative of the revolutionary people to begin expressing itself as something majestic, powerful and invincible.

Let all sceptics learn from this example from history. Let those who say: "We have no apparatus to replace the old one, which inevitably gravitates towards the defence of the bourgeoisie," be ashamed of themselves. For this apparatus *exists*. It is the Soviets. Don't be afraid of the people's initiative and independence. Put your faith in their revolutionary organisations, and you will see in *all* realms of state affairs the same strength, majesty and invincibility of the workers and peasants as were displayed in their unity and their fury against Kornilov.

Lack of faith in the people, fear of their initiative and independence, trepidation before their revolutionary energy instead of all-round and unqualified support for it—this is where the S.R. and Menshevik leaders have sinned most of all. This is where we find one of the deepest roots of their indecision, their vacillation, their infinite and infinitely fruitless attempts to pour new wine into the old bottles of the old, bureaucratic state apparatus.

Take the history of the democratisation of the army in the 1917 Russian revolution, the history of the Chernov Ministry, of Palchinsky's "reign", and of Peshekhonov's resignation—you will find what we have said above strikingly borne out at every step. Because there was no full confidence in the elected soldiers' organisations and no absolute observance of the principle of soldiers electing their commanding officers, the Kornilovs, Kaledins and counter-revolutionary officers came to be at the head of the army. This is a fact. Without deliberately closing one's eyes, one cannot fail to see that *after* the Kornilov affair Kerensky's government is *leaving everything as before*, that *in fact it is bringing*

*back the Kornilov affair.* The appointment of Alexeyev, the "peace" with the Klembovskys, Gagarins, Bagratians and other Kornilov men, and leniency in the treatment of Kornilov and Kaledin all very clearly prove that Kerensky is in fact bringing back the Kornilov affair.

There is no middle course. This has been shown by experience. Either all power goes to the Soviets and the army is made fully democratic, or another Kornilov affair occurs.

And what about the history of the Chernov Ministry? Didn't it prove that every more or less serious step towards actually satisfying the peasants' needs, every step showing confidence in the peasants and in their mass organisations and actions, evoked very great enthusiasm among them? Chernov, however, had to spend almost four months "haggling" with the Cadets and bureaucrats, who by endless delays and intrigues finally forced him to resign without having accomplished anything. For and during these four months the landowners and capitalists "won the game"—they saved the landed estates, delayed the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, and even started a number of repressions against the land committees.

There is no middle course. This has been shown by experience. Either all power goes to the Soviets both centrally and locally, and all land is given to the peasants *immediately*, pending the Constituent Assembly's decision, or the landowners and capitalists obstruct every step, restore the landowners' power, drive the peasants into a rage and carry things to an exceedingly violent peasant revolt.

The same thing happened when the capitalists (with the aid of Palchinsky) crushed every more or less serious attempt to supervise production, when the merchants thwarted the grain monopoly and broke up the regulated democratic distribution of grain and other foodstuffs just *begun* by Peshekhonov.

*What is now necessary in Russia is not to invent "new reforms", not to make "plans" for "comprehensive" changes. Nothing of the kind. This is how the situation is depicted—deliberately depicted in a false light—by the capitalists, the Potresovs, the Plekhanovs, who shout against "introducing socialism" and against the "dictatorship of the proletariat".* The situation in Russia in fact is such that the unprecedented burdens and hardships of the war, the unparalleled and very real danger of economic dislocation and famine have of themselves suggested the way out, have of themselves not only pointed out, but advanced reforms and other changes as absolutely necessary. These changes must be the grain monopoly, control over production and distribution, restriction of the issue of paper money, a fair exchange of grain for manufactured goods, etc.

Everyone recognises measures of this kind and in this direction as inevitable, and in many places they have already been launched from the most diverse sides. *They have already been launched*, but they have been and are being obstructed everywhere by the resistance of the landowners and the capitalists, which is being put up through the Kerensky government (an utterly bourgeois and Bonapartist government *in reality*), through the old bureaucratic state apparatus, and through the direct and indirect pressure of Russian and "Allied" finance capital.

Not so long ago I. Prilezhayev, lamenting the resignation of Peshekhonov and the collapse of the fixed prices and the grain monopoly, wrote in *Dyelo Naroda* (No. 147):

"Courage and resolve are what our governments of all compositions have lacked.... The revolutionary democrats must not wait; they must themselves show initiative, and intervene in the economic chaos in a planned way.... If anywhere, it is here that a firm course and a determined government are necessary."

That goes without saying. Words of gold. The only trouble is that the author forgot that the question of the firm course to take, of courage and resolve, is not a personal matter, but a question of which *class* is capable of manifesting courage and resolve. The only class capable of this is the proletariat. A courageous and resolute government steering a firm course is nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants. I. Prilezhayev unwittingly longs for *this dictatorship*.

What would such a dictatorship mean in practice? It would mean nothing but the fact that the resistance of the Kornilov men would be broken and the democratisation of the army restored and completed. Two days after its creation ninety-nine per cent of the army would be enthusiastic supporters of this dictatorship. This dictatorship would give land to the peasants and full power to the local peasant committees. How can anyone in his right senses doubt that the peasants would support this dictatorship? What Peshekhonov only *promised* ("the resistance of the capitalists has been broken" was what Peshekhonov actually said in his famous speech before the Congress of Soviets), this dictatorship would put into effect, would translate into reality. At the same time the democratic organisations of food supply, control, etc., that have already begun to form would in no way be eliminated. They would, on the contrary, be supported and developed, and all obstacles in the way of their work would be removed.

Only the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasants is capable of smashing the resistance of the capitalists, of displaying truly supreme courage and determination in the exercise of power, and of securing the enthusiastic, selfless and truly



heroic support of the masses both in the army and among the peasants.

*Power to the Soviets—this is the only way to make further progress gradual, peaceful and smooth*, keeping perfect pace with the political awareness and resolve of the majority of the people and with their own experience. Power to the Soviets means the complete transfer of the country's administration and economic control into the hands of the workers and peasants, to whom *nobody* would dare offer resistance and who, through practice, through their own experience, *would soon learn* how to distribute the land, products and grain properly.

*Rabochy Put* No. 10 September 27 (11), 1917  
Signed V. Lenin

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25,  
pp. 366-13

---

# THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND CIVIL WAR

THEY ARE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US WITH CIVIL WAR

The bourgeoisie, frightened by the refusal of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries to join a bloc with the Cadets, and by the probability of the democrats being quite capable of forming a government without them and governing Russia against them, are doing their best to intimidate the democrats.

Scare them as much as you can! This is the slogan of the whole bourgeois press. Scare them with all your might! Lie, slander, but frighten them!

*Birzhevka* does its scaring by fabricating news about Bolshevik activities. Others by spreading rumours about Alexeyev's resignation, and about the imminent German offensive against Petrograd, as if the facts do not prove that it is the Kornilov generals (to whom Alexeyev undoubtedly belongs) who are capable of opening the front to the Germans in Galicia and near Riga and near Petrograd, and that it is the Kornilov generals who are arousing the greatest hatred in the army against the General Staff

To make this method of intimidating the democrats more "solid" and convincing, they refer to the danger of "civil war". Of all the methods of intimidation, that of scaring with civil war is perhaps the most widespread. Here is the way the Rostov-on-the-Don Committee of the people's freedom party formulated this widespread idea, heartily welcomed in philistine circles, in its resolution of September 1 (*Rech* No. 210):

"The Committee is convinced that civil war may sweep away all the gains of the revolution and drown in rivers of blood our young, still unstable freedom, and is of the opinion that it is necessary to make an energetic protest against developing the revolution as proposed by the unrealisable socialist utopias if we are to save the gains of the revolution"

Here, the fundamental idea which is to be met with innumerable times in *Rech* editorials, in the articles of Plekhanov and Potresov, in the editorials of Menshevik papers, etc., etc., is expressed in the clearest, most precise, well considered and sub-

stantial form. It will therefore be useful to take up this idea in greater detail.

Let us try to make a more concrete analysis of the civil war question, on the basis of the half year's experience of our revolution, among other things.

This experience, similarly to the experience of all European revolutions, from the end of the eighteenth century on, shows that civil war is the sharpest form of the class struggle, it is that point in the class struggle when clashes and battles, economic and political, repeating themselves, growing, broadening, becoming acute, turn into an armed struggle of one class against another. More often than not—one may say almost always—in all more or less free and advanced countries the civil war is between those classes whose antagonistic position towards each other is created and deepened by the entire economic development of capitalism, by the entire history of modern society the world over—civil war is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

During the past half year of our revolution, we have experienced very strong spontaneous outbursts (April 20-21, July 3-4) in which the proletariat came very close to starting a civil war. On the other hand, the Kornilov revolt was a military conspiracy supported by the landowners and capitalists led by the Cadet Party, a conspiracy by which the bourgeoisie has actually begun a civil war.

Such are the facts. Such is the history of our own revolution. More than anything we must learn from this history, we must give a great deal of thought to the course it has taken and to its class significance.

Let us try to compare the germs of the proletarian civil war and the bourgeois civil war in Russia from the standpoint of (1) the spontaneous nature of the movement; (2) its aims; (3) the political consciousness of the masses participating in it; (4) the forces in the movement; (5) its tenacity. We think that if all the parties which are now "unnecessarily throwing about" the words "civil war" were to approach the question in this way, and make a real attempt to study the germs of the civil war, the class-consciousness of the entire Russian revolution would gain a very great deal.

Let us begin with the spontaneous nature of the movement. For the July 3-4 movement we have the testimony of such witnesses as the Menshevik *Rabochaya Gazeta* and the Socialist-Revolutionary *Dyelo Naroda* which have recognised the spontaneous origin of the movement. This testimony I quoted in an article published in *Proletarskoye Dyelo*, and issued as a separate leaflet entitled *An Answer*.\* For obvious reasons, however, the Menshe-

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol 25, pp. 208-18 —Ed.

viks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who are defending themselves and the part they played in persecuting the Bolsheviks, officially continue to deny the spontaneous nature of the outburst of July 3-4.

Let us put the controversial matter aside for the present. Let us take what is undisputed. No one denies the spontaneous nature of the April 20-21 movement. The Bolshevik Party joined this spontaneous movement under the slogan "All Power to the Soviets"; independently of the Bolsheviks it was joined by the late Linde, who led 30,000 armed soldiers into the street ready to arrest the government. (The action of these troops, let us say in parenthesis, has not been investigated and studied. If it is examined closely, and April 20 is given its place in the historic sequence of events, i.e., if it is seen as a link in the chain which extends from February 28 to August 29, it becomes clear that the fault and the error of the Bolsheviks was the *insufficient* revolutionism of their tactics, and by no means the excessive revolutionism the philistines accuse us of.)

The spontaneous nature of the movement leading to the proletariat beginning civil war is thus beyond doubt. On the other hand, there is not even a trace of anything resembling spontaneity in the Kornilov revolt; it was merely a conspiracy of generals who hoped by fraud and by the force of military command to carry part of the army with them.

It is beyond all doubt that the spontaneity of the movement is proof that it is deeply rooted in the masses, that its roots are firm and that it is inevitable. The proletarian revolution is firmly rooted, the bourgeois counter-revolution is without roots—this is what the facts prove if examined from the point of view of the spontaneous nature of the movement.

Let us now look at the aims of the movement. The movement of April 20-21 came very close to adopting the Bolshevik slogans, whereas that of July 3-4 was directly connected with them, was under their influence and guidance. The Bolshevik Party spoke quite openly, definitely, clearly, precisely, for all to hear, in its papers and in verbal propaganda of the chief *aims* of the proletarian civil war—the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, peace and an immediate offer of peace, confiscation of the landed estates.

We all know the aims of the Kornilov revolt, and no one among the democrats disputes that those aims were a dictatorship of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, dispersal of the Soviets, and preparations for the restoration of the monarchy. The Cadet Party, this main Kornilovite party (by the way, it ought to be called from now on the Kornilov party), possesses a larger press and greater forces for propaganda than the Bolsheviks, but it has

never dared and still does not dare to tell the people openly either about the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie or about the dispersal of the Soviets, or about the Kornilovite aims in general!

As far as the aims of the movement are concerned, the facts tell us that the proletarian civil war can come out with an open exposition of its final aims before the people and win the sympathies of the working people, whereas the bourgeois civil war can attempt to lead part of the masses only by concealing its aims; this is the tremendous difference in them as far as the class-consciousness of the masses is concerned.

The only objective data on this question seem to be those on party affiliation and elections. There do not appear to be any other facts which allow a clear judgement of the class-consciousness of the masses. It is clear that the proletarian-revolutionary movement is represented by the Bolshevik Party, and the bourgeois counter-revolutionary movement by the Cadet Party, and this can hardly be disputed after six months' experience of the revolution. Three comparisons of a factual nature can be made that concern the question under consideration. A comparison of the May elections to the local councils in Petrograd with the August elections to the city council shows a decrease in Cadet votes and a tremendous increase in Bolshevik votes. The Cadet press admits that, as a rule, Bolshevism is strong wherever masses of workers or soldiers are concentrated.

In the absence of any statistics concerning the fluctuation of the party membership, attendance at meetings, etc., the conscious support of the party by the *masses* may be judged only from published data concerning cash collections for the party. These data show a tremendous mass-scale heroism on the part of worker Bolsheviks in collecting money for *Pravda*, for the papers that have been suppressed, etc. The reports of such collections have always been published. Among the Cadets we see nothing of the kind; their party work is obviously being "nourished" by contributions from the rich. There is no trace of active aid on the part of the masses.

Lastly, a comparison of the movements of April 20-21 and July 3-4 on the one hand, and the Kornilov revolt on the other, shows that the Bolsheviks indicated point-blank to the masses who their enemy in the civil war is, namely, the bourgeoisie, the landowners and capitalists. The Kornilov revolt has already demonstrated that the troops who followed Kornilov did so because they had been *completely deceived*, a fact made obvious the moment the Savage Division and Kornilov's contingents came up against the Petrograd masses.

Furthermore, what data indicate the *strength* of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the civil war? The Bolsheviks are strong

only in the numbers and class-consciousness of the proletarians, in the sympathy with the Bolshevik slogans displayed by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik "rank and file" (i.e., workers and poor peasants). It is a fact that these slogans actually won over the *majority* of the active revolutionary masses in Petrograd on April 20-21, June 18, and July 3-4.

A comparison of the data on the "parliamentary" elections and the data on the above-named mass movements fully corroborates, in respect of Russia, an observation often made in the West, namely, that the revolutionary proletariat is incomparably *stronger* in the *extra-parliamentary* than in the parliamentary struggle, as far as influencing the *masses* and drawing them into the struggle is concerned. This is a very important observation in respect of civil war.

It is quite clear why in all the circumstances and the entire situation of parliamentary struggle and elections the strength of the oppressed classes is less than the strength they can actually develop in civil war.

The strength of the Cadets and the Kornilov revolt is the strength of *wealth*. The press and a long series of political actions show that Anglo-French capital and imperialism are *in favour* of the Cadets and the Kornilov movement. It is common knowledge that the entire Right wing of the Moscow Conference of August 12 gave frantic support to Kornilov and Kaledin. It is common knowledge that the French and British bourgeois press "aided" Kornilov. There are indications of his having been aided by the *banks*.

All the power of wealth stood behind Kornilov—and what a miserable and rapid failure! There are only two social forces among Kornilov's supporters apart from the wealthy—the Savage Division and the Cossacks. In the case of the former it is *only* the power of ignorance and deception, and this power is the more formidable the longer the press remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie. After a victory in the civil war, the proletariat would undermine *this* source of "power" once and for all.

As to the Cossacks, they are a section of the population consisting of rich, small or medium landed proprietors (the average holding is about 50 dessiatines) in one of those outlying regions of Russia that have retained many medieval traits in their way of life, their economy, and their customs. We can regard this as the socio-economic basis for a Russian Vendée.<sup>123</sup> But what have the *facts* of the Kornilov-Kaledin movement proved? *Not even* Kaledin the "beloved leader" supported by the Guchkovs, Milyukovs, Ryabushinskys and Co., has *succeeded* in creating a mass movement!! Kaledin marched towards civil war much more

"directly", much more forthrightly than did the Bolsheviks. Kaledin went specifically "to rouse the Don", and still he has not aroused a mass movement in his "home" region, in a Cossack region far removed from Russian democracy in general. On the part of the proletariat, on the contrary, we observe spontaneous outbursts of the movement in the very centre of the influence and power of anti-Bolshevik all-Russia democracy.

Objective data on the attitude of various strata and economic groups of the Cossacks towards democracy and towards the Kornilov revolt are lacking. There are only indications to the effect that the majority of the poor and middle Cossacks are rather inclined towards democracy and that only the officers and the top layer of the well-to-do Cossacks are entirely in favour of Kornilov.

However that may be, the extreme weakness of a mass Cossack movement in favour of a bourgeois counter-revolution has been historically proved since the experience of August 26-31.

There remains the last question, that of the *tenacity* of the movement. As far as the Bolshevik, proletarian revolutionary movement is concerned, we have proof that the struggle against Bolshevism has been conducted during the six months' existence of a republic in Russia both ideologically, with a *gigantic* preponderance of press organs and propaganda forces on the side of the opponents of Bolshevism (even if we risk classing the campaign of slander as "ideological" struggle), and *by means of repressions*, which include hundreds of people arrested, our main printing-plant demolished, and the chief newspaper and a number of other papers suppressed. The result can be seen in the facts—a tremendous growth of support for the Bolsheviks in the August Petrograd elections, and in both the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties, a strengthening of the internationalist and Left trends that are drawing close to Bolshevism. This means that the tenacity of the proletarian revolutionary movement in republican Russia is very great. The facts tell us that the combined efforts of the Cadets, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks *have not succeeded* in weakening that movement in the least. On the contrary, it was the alliance of the Kornilovites with "democracy" that *strengthened* Bolshevism. The only possible means of struggle against the proletarian revolutionary trend are ideological influence and repressions.

Data on the tenacity of the Cadet-Kornilov movement are still lacking. The Cadets have suffered no persecution at all. Even Guchkov has been set free and Maklakov and Milvukov were not even arrested. *Rech* has not been suppressed. The Cadets are being spared. The Kornilovite Cadets are being *courted* by Kerensky's government. Suppose we put it this way: assuming

that the Anglo-French and the Russian Ryabushinskys will give millions and millions more to the Cadets, to *Yedinstvo*, *Dyen*, etc., for the new election campaign in Petrograd, is it probable that the number of their votes will now increase, after the Kornilov revolt? Judging by meetings, etc., the answer to this question can hardly be anything but negative.

\* \* \*

Summing up the results of the analysis in which we compared the data furnished by the history of the Russian revolution, we arrive at the conclusion that the beginning of the proletariat's civil war has revealed the strength, the class-consciousness, deep-rootedness, growth, and tenacity of the movement. The beginning of the bourgeoisie's civil war has revealed no strength, no class-consciousness among the masses, no depth whatsoever, no chance of victory.

The alliance of the Cadets with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against the Bolsheviks, i.e., against the revolutionary proletariat, has been tried in practice for a number of months, and this alliance of the temporarily disguised Kornilovites with the "democrats" has actually strengthened and not weakened the Bolsheviks, and led to the collapse of the "alliance", and to the strengthening of the Left opposition among the Mensheviks.

An alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks against the Cadets, against the bourgeoisie, *has not yet been tried*; or, to be more precise, such an alliance *has been tried on one front only, for five days only*, from August 26 to August 31, the period of the Kornilov revolt, and this alliance at that time scored a victory over the counter-revolution with an ease never yet achieved in any revolution; it was such a crushing suppression of the bourgeois, landowners', capitalist, Allied-imperialist and Cadet counter-revolution, that the civil war *from that side* ceased to exist, was a mere nothing from the very outset, collapsed before any "battle" had taken place.

In the face of this historic fact the entire bourgeois press and all its chorus (the Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Breshko-Breshkovskayas, etc.) are shouting with all their might that an alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries "threatens" the horrors of civil war!

This would be funny, if it were not so sad. It is sad indeed that such an open, self-evident, glaring absurdity, such a flouting of the facts of the whole history of our revolution, can still find listeners. . . . This only proves that the selfish bourgeois lie is still widespread (and this cannot be avoided as long as the press is



monopolised by the bourgeoisie), a lie that shouts down and drowns the most undoubted, palpably obvious lessons of the revolution.

If there is an absolutely undisputed lesson of the revolution, one fully proved by facts, it is that only an alliance of the Bolsheviks with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, only an immediate transfer of all power to the Soviets would make civil war in Russia impossible, for a civil war begun by the bourgeoisie against such an alliance, against the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, is inconceivable; such a "war" would not last even until the first battle: the bourgeoisie, *for the second time* since the Kornilov revolt, would not be able to move even the Savage Division, or the former number of Cossack units against the Soviet Government!

The peaceful development of any revolution is, generally speaking, extremely rare and difficult, because revolution is the maximum exacerbation of the sharpest class contradictions: but in a peasant country, at a time when a union of the proletariat with the peasantry *can* give *peace* to people worn out by a most unjust and criminal war, when that union can give the peasantry *all the land*, in that country, at that exceptional moment in history, a peaceful development of the revolution is *possible* and *probable* if all power is transferred to the Soviets. The struggle of parties for power within the Soviets may proceed peacefully, if the Soviets are made fully democratic, and "petty thefts" and violations of democratic principles, such as giving the soldiers one representative to every five hundred, while the workers have one representative to every thousand voters, are eliminated. In a democratic republic such petty thefts will have to disappear.

When confronted with Soviets that have given all the land to the peasants without compensation and offer a just peace to all the peoples—when confronted with such Soviets the alliance of the British, French and Russian bourgeoisie, the Kornilovs, Buchanans, Ryabushinskys, Milvukovs, Plekhanovs, and Potresovs is quite impotent and is not to be feared.

The bourgeoisie's resistance to the transfer of the land to the peasants without compensation, to similar reforms in other realms of life, to a just peace and a break with imperialism, is, of course, inevitable. But for such resistance to reach the stage of civil war, *masses* of some kind are necessary, masses capable of *fighting* and vanquishing the Soviets. The bourgeoisie does *not* have these masses, and has nowhere to get them. The sooner and the more resolutely the Soviets take all power, the sooner both Savage Divisions and Cossacks will split into an insignificant minority of politically-conscious Kornilov supporters and a huge majority of those in favour of a democratic and *socialist* (for it is with social-

ism that we shall then be dealing) alliance of workers and peasants.

When power passes to the Soviets, the resistance of the bourgeoisie will result in *scores and hundreds* of workers and peasants "keeping track of", supervising, controlling, and registering *every single* capitalist, for the interests of the workers and peasants will demand struggle against the capitalists' deception of the people. The forms and methods of this accountancy and control have been developed and simplified by capitalism itself, by such capitalist creations as banks, big factories, trusts, railways, the post office, consumers' societies, and trade unions. If the Soviets punish those capitalists who evade the most detailed accounting or who deceive the people, punish them by confiscating all their property and arresting them for a short time, that will be sufficient to break all the resistance of the bourgeoisie by bloodless means. For it is through the banks, once they are nationalised, through the unions of employees, through the post office, the consumers' societies, and the trade unions, that control and the accounting will become universal, all-powerful, and irresistible.

And Russia's Soviets, the alliance of her workers and poor peasants, are not alone in the *steps* they take *towards* socialism. If we were alone, we should not be able to accomplish this task peacefully, for it is essentially an international task. But we have enormous reserves, the armies of the most advanced workers in other countries, where Russia's break with imperialism and the imperialist war will inevitably accelerate the workers' socialist revolution that is maturing.

\* \* \*

Some speak about "rivers of blood" in a civil war. This is mentioned in the resolution of the Kornilovite Cadets quoted above. This phrase is repeated in a thousand ways by all the bourgeois and opportunists. Since the Kornilov revolt all the class-conscious workers laugh, will continue to laugh and cannot help laughing at it.

However, the question of "rivers of blood" in the present time of war can and must be studied by an approximate computation of forces, consequences, and results; it must be taken seriously and not as an empty stock phrase, not as simply the hypocrisy of the Cadets, who have done *everything* in their power *to enable* Kornilov to drown Russia in "rivers of blood", and to restore the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the power of the landowners, and the monarchy.

"Rivers of blood," they say. Let us analyse *this* aspect of the question *as well*.

Let us assume that the vacillations of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries continue; that these parties do *not* hand over power to the Soviets; that they do *not* overthrow Kerensky; that they restore the old rotten compromise with the bourgeoisie in a somewhat different form (say, "non-partisan" *Kornilovites* instead of Cadets); that they do not replace the apparatus of state power by the Soviet apparatus, do not offer peace, do not break with imperialism, and do not confiscate the landed estates. Let us assume that this is the outcome of the present wavering of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, of this present "September 12".

The experience of our own revolution tells us most clearly that the consequence of this would be a still further weakening of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, their further separation from the masses, an incredible growth of indignation and bitterness among the masses, a tremendous growth of sympathy with the revolutionary proletariat, with the Bolsheviks.

Under such conditions, the proletariat of the capital will be still closer to a Commune, to a workers' uprising, to the conquest of power, to a civil war in its highest and most decisive form, than it is at present; after the experience of April 20-21 and July 3-4 such a result must be recognised as historically inevitable.

"Rivers of blood," shout the Cadets. But such rivers of blood would give victory to the proletariat and the poor peasantry, and it is a hundred to one that this victory would bring *peace* in place of the imperialist war, *i.e.*, that it would save the lives of *hundreds of thousands* of men who are now shedding their blood for the sake of a division of spoils and seizures (annexations) by the capitalists. If April 20-21 had ended by the transfer of all power to the Soviets, and the Bolsheviks in alliance with the poor peasantry had won in the Soviets, it would have saved the lives of the *half million* Russian soldiers, who certainly perished in the battles of June 18, even if it had cost "rivers of blood".

This is how every class-conscious Russian worker and soldier figures, this is how he must figure, if he weighs and analyses the question of civil war now being raised everywhere; and, of course, such a worker or soldier, who has experienced many things and given thought to them, will not be frightened by the cries of "rivers of blood" raised by individuals, parties and groups willing to sacrifice *more millions* of Russian soldiers for the sake of Constantinople, Lvov, Warsaw, and "victory over Germany".

No "rivers of blood" in an internal civil war can even approximately equal those *seas* of blood which the Russian imperialists have shed since June 19 (in spite of the very great

chances they had of avoiding this by handing over power to the Soviets).

All you Milyukovs, Potresovs and Plekhanovs be careful about your arguments *against* "rivers of blood" in civil war while this present war continues, for the soldiers have seen *seas* of blood and know what they mean.

The international situation of the Russian revolution now, in 1917, the fourth year of a terrifically burdensome and criminal war, that has worn out the peoples, is such that an offer of a just peace on the part of a Russian proletariat victorious in the civil war would have a hundred to one chance of achieving an armistice and peace *without the shedding of further seas of blood*.

For a combination of warring Anglo-French and German imperialism *against* the proletarian socialist Russian Republic is *impossible* in practice, while a combination of British, Japanese and American imperialism against us is extremely difficult to realise and is not at all dangerous to us, if only because of Russia's geographical position. On the other hand, the existence of revolutionary and socialist proletarian masses in *all* the European states is a fact; the maturing and the inevitability of the world-wide socialist revolution is beyond doubt, and such a revolution can be seriously aided only by the progress of the Russian revolution and not by delegations and not by playing at Stockholm conferences with the foreign Plekhanovs or Tseretelis.

The bourgeoisie wails about the inevitable defeat of a Commune in Russia, i.e., defeat of the proletariat if it were to conquer power.

These are false, selfish class wailings.

If the proletariat gains power it will have *every* chance of retaining it and of leading Russia until there is a victorious revolution in the West.

In the first place, we have learned much since the Commune, and we would not repeat its fatal errors, we would not leave the banks in the hands of the bourgeoisie, we would not confine ourselves to defence against the Versailles (or the Kornilovites) but would take the offensive against them and crush them.

Secondly, the victorious proletariat would give Russia peace, and no power on earth would be able to overthrow a government of *peace*, a government of an honest, sincere, just peace, after all the horrors of more than three years' butchery of the peoples.

Thirdly, the victorious proletariat would give the peasantry the land immediately and without compensation. And a tremendous majority of the peasantry—worn out and embittered by the "playing around with the landowners" practised by our government, particularly the coalition government, particularly the Kerensky

government— would support the victorious proletariat absolutely, unreservedly, with every means in its power.

You Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries are all talking about the “heroic efforts” of the people. Only recently I came across this phrase for the nth time in the leading article of your *Izvestia* of the Central Executive Committee. With you it is a *mere* phrase. But the workers and peasants read it and *think* about it, and such deliberation—reinforced by the experience of the Kornilov revolt, by the “experience” of Peshekhonov’s ministry, by the “experience” of Chernov’s ministry, *and so forth*—every such deliberation inevitably leads to the conclusion that this “heroic effort” is nothing but confidence of the poor peasantry in the city workers as their most faithful allies and leaders. The heroic effort is nothing but the victory of the Russian proletariat over the bourgeoisie in civil war, for such a victory alone will save the country from painful vacillations, it alone will show the way out, it alone will give land and peace.

If an alliance between the city workers and the poor peasantry can be effected through an immediate transfer of power to the Soviets, so much the better. The Bolsheviks will do *everything* to secure this *peaceful* development of the revolution. Without this, even the Constituent Assembly, by itself, will not save the situation, for even there the Socialist-Revolutionaries may continue their “playing” at agreements with the Cadets, with Breshko-Breshkovskaya and Kerensky (in what way are they better than Cadets?), and so on, and so forth.

If even the experience of the Kornilov revolt has taught the “democrats” nothing, and they continue the destructive policy of vacillation and compromise, we say that nothing is more ruinous to the proletarian revolution than these vacillations. That being the case, do not frighten us, gentlemen, with civil war. Civil war is inevitable, if you do not wish to break with Kornilovism and the “coalition” right now, once and for all. This war will bring victory over the exploiters, it will give the land to the peasants, it will give peace to the peoples, it will open the right road to the victorious revolution of the world socialist proletariat

Written in the first half of  
September, 1917

Published in *Rabochy Put* No. 12,  
September 29 (16), 1917  
Signed *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 29-32

---

# THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

THE MARXIST THEORY OF THE STATE  
AND THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT  
IN THE REVOLUTION<sup>124</sup>

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

The question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in theory and in practical politics. The imperialist war has immensely accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the working people by the state, which is merging more and more with the all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming increasingly monstrous. The advanced countries—we mean their hinterland—are becoming military convict prisons for the workers.

The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the people's position unbearable and increasing their anger. The world proletarian revolution is clearly maturing. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance.

The elements of opportunism that accumulated over the decades of comparatively peaceful development have given rise to the trend of social-chauvinism which dominates the official socialist parties throughout the world. This trend—socialism in words and chauvinism in deeds (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovich, and, in a slightly veiled form, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co. in Russia; Scheidemann, Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians in England, etc., etc.)—is conspicuous for the base, servile adaptation of the “leaders of socialism” to the interests not only of “their” national bourgeoisie, but of “their” state, for the majority of the so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist war is a war for the division and redivision of this kind of booty. The struggle to free the working people from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices concerning the “state”.

First of all we examine the theory of Marx and Engels of the state, and dwell in particular detail on those aspects of this theory which are ignored or have been distorted by the opportunists. Then we deal specially with the one who is chiefly responsible for these distortions, Karl Kautsky, the best-known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), which has met with such miserable bankruptcy in the present war. Lastly, we sum up the main results of the experience of the Russian revolutions of 1905 and particularly of 1917. Apparently, the latter is now (early August 1917) completing the first stage of its development; but this revolution as a whole can only be understood as a link in a chain of socialist proletarian revolutions being caused by the imperialist war. The question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state, therefore, is acquiring not only practical political importance, but also the significance of a most urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do before long to free themselves from capitalist tyranny.

*The Author*

August 1917

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The present, second edition is published virtually unaltered, except that section 3 has been added to Chapter II.

*The Author*

Moscow  
December 17, 1918

## CHAPTER I

### CLASS SOCIETY AND THE STATE

#### 1. THE STATE—A PRODUCT OF THE IRRECONCILABILITY OF CLASS ANTAGONISMS

What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to hallow their *names* to a certain extent for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its *substance*, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it. Today, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labour movement concur in this doctoring of Marxism. They omit, obscure or distort the revolutionary side of this theory, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!). And more and more frequently German bourgeois scholars, only yesterday specialists in the annihilation of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they claim, educated the labour unions which are so splendidly organised for the purpose of waging a predatory war!

In these circumstances, in view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to *re-establish* what Marx really taught on the subject of the state. This will necessitate a number of long quotations from the works of Marx and Engels themselves. Of course, long quotations will render the text cumbersome and not help at all to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly dispense with them. All, or at any







rate all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must by all means be quoted as fully as possible so that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the founders of scientific socialism, and of the evolution of those views, and so that their distortion by the "Kautskyism" now prevailing may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels's works, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We shall have to translate the quotations from the German originals, as the Russian translations, while very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says:

"The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without; just as little is it 'the reality of the ethical idea', 'the image and reality of reason', as Hegel maintains. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state." (Pp. 177-78, sixth German edition.)<sup>125</sup>

This expresses with perfect clarity the basic idea of Marxism with regard to the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is a product and a manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises where, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.

It is on this most important and fundamental point that the distortion of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begins.

On the one hand, the bourgeois, and particularly the petty-bourgeois, ideologists, compelled under the weight of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state only exists where there are class antagonisms and a class struggle, "correct" Marx

in such a way as to make it appear that the state is an organ for the *reconciliation* of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither have arisen nor maintained itself had it been possible to reconcile classes. From what the petty-bourgeois and philistine professors and publicists say, with quite frequent and benevolent references to Marx, it appears that the state does reconcile classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of "order", which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, however, order means the reconciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another; to alleviate the conflict means reconciling classes and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of struggle to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when, in the revolution of 1917, the question of the significance and role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action, and, moreover, action on a mass scale, all the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks descended at once to the petty-bourgeois theory that the "state" "reconciles" classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this petty-bourgeois and philistine "reconciliation" theory. That the state is an organ of the rule of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it) is something the petty-bourgeois democrats will never be able to understand. Their attitude to the state is one of the most striking manifestations of the fact that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (a point that we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats using near-socialist phrasology.

On the other hand, the "Kautskyite" distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically", it is not denied that the state is an organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is overlooked or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above* society and "*alienating* itself *more and more* from it", it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation". As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution. And—as we shall show in detail further on—it is this conclusion which Kautsky has "forgotten" and distorted.

## 2. SPECIAL BODIES OF ARMED MEN, PRISONS, ETC.

Engels continues:

"As distinct from the old gentile [tribal or clan] order, the state, first, divides its subjects *according to territory*. . . ."

This division seems "natural" to us, but it cost a prolonged struggle against the old organisation according to generations or tribes.

"The second distinguishing feature is the establishment of a *public power* which no longer directly coincides with the population organising itself as an armed force. This special, public power is necessary because a self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the split into classes. . . . This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons, and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [clan] society knew nothing. . . ."

Engels elucidates the concept of the "power" which is called the state, a power which arose from society but places itself above it and alienates itself more and more from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men having prisons, etc., at their command.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state "does not directly coincide" with the armed population, with its "self-acting armed organisation".

Like all great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tries to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to what prevailing philistinism regards as least worthy of attention, as the most habitual thing, hallowed by prejudices that are not only deep-rooted but, one might say, petrified. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But how can it be otherwise?

From the viewpoint of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the nineteenth century whom Engels was addressing, and who had not gone through or closely observed a single great revolution, it could not have been otherwise. They could not understand at all what a "self-acting armed organisation of the population" was. When asked why it became necessary to have special bodies of armed men placed above society and alienating themselves from it (police and a standing army), the West-European and Russian philistines are inclined to utter a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovsky, to refer to the growing complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so on.

Such a reference seems "scientific", and effectively lulls the ordinary person to sleep by obscuring the important and basic

fact, namely, the split of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes.

Were it not for this split, the "self-acting armed organisation of the population" would differ from the primitive organisation of a stick-wielding herd of monkeys, or of primitive men, or of men united in clans, by its complexity, its high technical level, and so on. But such an organisation would still be possible.

It is impossible because civilised society is split into antagonistic, and, moreover, irreconcilably antagonistic, classes, whose "self-acting" arming would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, shows us the naked class struggle, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters.

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very same question which every great revolution raises before us in practice, palpably and, what is more, on a scale of mass action, namely, the question of the relationship between "special" bodies of armed men and the "self-acting armed organisation of the population". We shall see how this question is specifically illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions.

But to return to Engels's exposition

He points out that sometimes—in certain parts of North America, for example—this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and those parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonist predominated), but that, generally speaking, it grows stronger:

"It [the public power] grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have tuned up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to swallow the whole of society and even the state."

This was written not later than the early nineties of the last century, Engels's last preface being dated June 16, 1891. The turn towards imperialism—meaning the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a grand-scale colonial policy, and so forth—was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany. Since then "rivalry in conquest" has taken a gigantic stride, all the

more because by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century the world had been completely divided up among these "rivals in conquest", i.e., among the predatory Great Powers. Since then, military and naval armaments have grown fantastically and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by Britain or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the "swallowing" of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power close to complete catastrophe.

Engels could, as early as 1891, point to "rivalry in conquest" as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, while the social-chauvinist scoundrels have ever since 1914, when this rivalry, many times intensified, gave rise to an imperialist war, been covering up the defence of the predatory interests of "their own" bourgeoisie with phrases about "defence of the fatherland", "defence of the republic and the revolution", etc.!

### 3. THE STATE—AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF THE OPPRESSED CLASS

The maintenance of the special public power standing above society requires taxes and state loans.

"Having public power and the right to levy taxes," Engels writes, "the officials now stand, as organs of society, *above* society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile [clan] constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it. . . ." Special laws are enacted proclaiming the sanctity and immunity of the officials. "The shabbiest police servant" has more "authority" than the representatives of the clan, but even the head of the military power of a civilised state may well envy the elder of a clan the "unstrained respect" of society.

The question of the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is raised here. The main point indicated is: what is it that places them *above* society? We shall see how this theoretical question was answered in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was obscured from a reactionary standpoint by Kautsky in 1912.

"Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politi-

cally dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. . . ." The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, "the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both. . . ." Such were the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany.

Such, we may add, is the Kerensky government in republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary proletariat, at a moment when, owing to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Soviets have *already* become impotent, while the bourgeoisie are not *yet* strong enough simply to disperse them.

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, "wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely", first, by means of the "direct corruption of officials" (America); secondly, by means of an "alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange" (France and America).

At present, imperialism and the domination of the banks have "developed" into an exceptional art both these methods of upholding and giving effect to the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions. Since, for instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the "socialist" S.R.s and Mensheviks joined in wedlock to the bourgeoisie, in the coalition government, Mr. Palchinsky obstructed every measure intended for curbing the capitalists and their marauding practices, their plundering of the state by means of war contracts; and since later on Mr. Palchinsky, upon resigning from the Cabinet (and being, of course, replaced by another quite similar Palchinsky), was "rewarded" by the capitalists with a lucrative job with a salary of 120,000 rubles per annum—what would you call that? Direct or indirect bribery? An alliance of the government and the syndicates, or "merely" friendly relations? What role do the Chernovs, Tseretelis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs play? Are they the "direct" or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury-looters?

Another reason why the omnipotence of "wealth" is more *certain* in a democratic republic is that it does not depend on defects in the political machinery or on the faulty political shell



of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretelis and Co.), it establishes its power so securely, so firmly that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it.

We must also note that Engels is most explicit in calling universal suffrage as well an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously taking account of the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is

“the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the present-day state”.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, all the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, expect just this “more” from universal suffrage. They themselves share, and instil into the minds of the people, the false notion that universal suffrage “in the *present-day* state” is really capable of revealing the will of the majority of the working people and of securing its realisation.

Here we can only indicate this false notion, only point out that Engels’s perfectly clear, precise and concrete statement is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation of the “official” (i.e., opportunist) socialist parties. A detailed exposure of the utter falsity of this notion which Engels brushes aside here is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the “*present-day*” state.

Engels gives a general summary of his views in the most popular of his works in the following words:

“The state, then, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies that did without it, that had no idea of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the split of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this split. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes not only will have ceased to be a necessity, but will become a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them the state will inevitably fall. Society, which will reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers, will put the whole machinery of state where it will then belong: into a museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning-wheel and the bronze axe.”

We do not often come across this passage in the propaganda and agitation literature of the present-day Social-Democrats. Even when we do come across it, it is mostly quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, i.e., it is done to show official respect for Engels, and no attempt is made to gauge the breadth and depth of the revolution that this relegating of "the whole machinery of state to a museum of antiquities" implies. In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

#### 4. THE "WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE, AND VIOLENT REVOLUTION

Engels's words regarding the "withering away" of the state are so widely known, they are so often quoted, and so clearly reveal the essence of the customary adaptation of Marxism to opportunism that we must deal with them in detail. We shall quote the whole argument from which they are taken.

"The proletariat seizes state power and turns the means of production into state property to begin with. But thereby it abolishes itself as the proletariat, abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, and abolishes also the state as state. Society thus far, operating amid class antagonisms, needed the state, that is, an organisation of the particular exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, and, therefore, especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited class in the conditions of oppression determined by the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom or bondage, wage-labour). The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its concentration in a visible corporation. But it was this only insofar as it was the state of that class which itself represented, for its own time, society as a whole: in ancient times, the state of slave-owning citizens; in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility; in our own time, of the bourgeoisie. When at last it becomes the real representative of the whole of society it renders itself unnecessary. As soon as there is no longer any social class to be held in subjection, as soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon the present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from this struggle, are removed, nothing more remains to be held in subjection—nothing necessitating a special coercive force, a state. The first act by which the state really comes forward as the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the

means of production in the name of society—is also its last independent act as a state. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then dies down of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things, and by the conduct of processes of production. The state is not ‘abolished’. *It withers away*. This gives the measure of the value of the phrase ‘a free people’s state’, both as to its justifiable use for a time from an agitational point of view, and as to its ultimate scientific insufficiency; and also of the so-called anarchists’ demand that the state be abolished overnight.” (*Herr Eugen Dühring’s Revolution in Science* [*Anti-Dühring*], pp. 301-03, third German edition.)

It is safe to say that of this argument of Engels’s, which is so remarkably rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of socialist thought among modern socialist parties, namely, that according to Marx the state “withers away”—as distinct from the anarchist doctrine of the “abolition” of the state. To prune Marxism to such an extent means reducing it to opportunism, for this “interpretation” only leaves a vague notion of a slow, even, gradual change, of absence of leaps and storms, of absence of revolution. The current, widespread, popular, if one may say so, conception of the “withering away” of the state undoubtedly means obscuring, if not repudiating, revolution.

Such an “interpretation”, however, is the crudest distortion of Marxism, advantageous only to the bourgeoisie. In point of theory, it is based on disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations indicated in, say, Engels’s “summary” argument we have just quoted in full.

In the first place, at the very outset of his argument, Engels says that, in seizing state power, the proletariat thereby “abolishes the state as state”. It is not done to ponder over the meaning of this. Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or is considered to be something in the nature of “Hegelian weakness” on Engels’s part. As a matter of fact, however, these words briefly express the experience of one of the greatest proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail in its proper place. As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the proletarian revolution “abolishing” the *bourgeois* state, while the words about the state withering away refer to the remnants of the *proletarian* state *after* the socialist revolution. According to Engels, the bourgeois state does not “wither away”, but is “abolished” by the proletariat in the course of the revolution. What withers away after this revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state.

Secondly, the state is a "special coercive force". Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with the utmost lucidity. And from it follows that the "special coercive force" for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, of millions of working people by handfuls of the rich, must be replaced by a "special coercive force" for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat). This is precisely what is meant by "abolition of the state as state". This is precisely the "act" of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society. And it is self-evident that *such* a replacement of one (bourgeois) "special force" by another (proletarian) "special force" cannot possibly take place in the form of "withering away".

Thirdly, in speaking of the state "withering away", and the even more graphic and colourful "dying down of itself", Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period *after* "the state has taken possession of the means of production in the name of the whole of society". that is, *after* the socialist revolution. We all know that the political form of the "state" at that time is the most complete democracy. But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists, who shamelessly distort Marxism, that Engels is consequently speaking here of *democracy* "dying down of itself", or "withering away". This seems very strange at first sight. But it is "incomprehensible" only to those who have not thought about democracy *also* being a state and, consequently, also disappearing when the state disappears. Revolution alone can "abolish" the bourgeois state. The state in general, i.e., the most complete democracy, can only "wither away".

Fourthly, after formulating his famous proposition that "the state withers away", Engels at once explains specifically that this proposition is directed against both the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this, Engels puts in the forefront that conclusion, drawn from the proposition that "the state withers away", which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 are completely unaware, or do not remember, that Engels directed his conclusions from that proposition *not* against the anarchists *alone*. And of the remaining ten, probably nine do not know the meaning of a "free people's state" or why an attack on this slogan means an attack on the opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary teaching is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing philistinism. The conclusion directed against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times; it has been vulgarised, and rammed into people's heads in the shallowest form, and has acquired the strength of a prejudice, whereas the

conclusion directed against the opportunists has been obscured and "forgotten"!

The "free people's state" was a programme demand and a catchword current among the German Social-Democrats in the seventies. This catchword is devoid of all political content except that it describes the concept of democracy in a pompous philistine fashion. Insofar as it hinted in a legally permissible manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to "justify" its use "for a time" from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist catchword, for it amounted to something more than prettifying bourgeois democracy, and was also failure to understand the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism. But we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a "special force" for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, *every* state is *not* "free" and *not* a "people's state". Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the seventies.<sup>126</sup>

Fifthly, the same work of Engels's, whose argument about the withering away of the state everyone remembers, also contains an argument of the significance of violent revolution. Engels's historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This "no one remembers". It is not done in modern socialist parties to talk or even think about the significance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among the people. And yet it is inseparably bound up with the "withering away" of the state into one harmonious whole.

Here is Engels's argument:

"... That force, however, plays yet another role [other than that of a diabolical power] in history, a revolutionary role; that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with a new one,<sup>127</sup> that it is the instrument with which social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of an economy based on exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force demoralises, he says, the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has been given by every victorious revolution! And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which may, after all, be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has penetrated the nation's

mentality following the humiliation of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>128</sup> And this parson's mode of thought—dull, insipid and impotent—presumes to impose itself on the most revolutionary party that history has known!" (P. 193, third German edition, Part II, end of Chap. IV.)<sup>129</sup>

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-Democrats between 1878 and 1894, i.e., right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single theory?

Usually the two are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled or sophistic selection made arbitrarily (or to please the powers that be) of first one, then another argument, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, if not more, it is the idea of the "withering away" that is placed in the forefront. Dialectics are replaced by eclecticism—this is the most usual, the most widespread practice to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature in relation to Marxism. This sort of substitution is, of course, nothing new; it was observed even in the history of classical Greek philosophy. In falsifying Marxism in opportunist fashion, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the easiest way of deceiving the people. It gives an illusory satisfaction; it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all trends of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it provides no integral and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the theory of Marx and Engels of the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) through the process of "withering away", but, as a general rule, only through a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honour, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated statements (see the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*, with their proud and open proclamation of the inevitability of a violent revolution—see what Marx wrote nearly thirty years later, in criticising the Gotha Programme of 1875, when he mercilessly castigated the opportunist character of that programme<sup>130</sup>)—this panegyric is by no means a mere "impulse", a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the *entire* theory of Marx and Engels. The betrayal of their theory by the now prevailing social-chauvinist and Kautskyite trends expresses itself strikingly in both these trends ignoring *such* propaganda and agitation.

The supersession of the bourgeois state by the proletarian state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, i.e., of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of "withering away".

A detailed and concrete elaboration of these views was given by Marx and Engels when they studied each particular revolutionary situation, when they analysed the lessons of the experience of each particular revolution. We shall now pass to this, undoubtedly the most important, part of their theory.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STATE AND REVOLUTION. THE EXPERIENCE OF 1848-51

#### 1. THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

The first works of mature Marxism—*The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto*—appeared just on the eve of the revolution of 1848. For this reason, in addition to presenting the general principles of Marxism, they reflect to a certain degree the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. It will, therefore, be more expedient, perhaps, to examine what the authors of these works said about the state immediately before they drew conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-51.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx wrote:

"The working class, in the course of development, will substitute for the old bourgeois society an association which will preclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power proper, since political power is precisely the official expression of class antagonism in bourgeois society." (P. 182, German edition, 1885.)

It is instructive to compare this general exposition of the idea of the state disappearing after the abolition of classes with the exposition contained in the *Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels a few months later—in November 1847, to be exact:

"... In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat. . . .

"... We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

"The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible." (Pp. 31 and 37, seventh German edition, 1906.)

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune); and also, a highly interesting definition of the state, which is also one of the "forgotten words" of Marxism: *"the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class"*.

This definition of the state has never been explained in the prevailing propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic parties. More than that, it has been deliberately ignored, for it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face for the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the "peaceful development of democracy".

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyites, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they "*forget*" to add that, in the first place, according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. And, secondly, the working people need a 'state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class'.

The state is a special organisation of force: it is an organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The working people need the state only to suppress the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, can carry it out. For the proletariat is the only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the working and exploited people in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely removing it.

The exploiting classes need political rule to maintain exploitation, i.e., in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority against the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order to completely abolish all exploitation, i.e., in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the land-owners and capitalists.

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those sham socialists who replaced the class struggle by dreams of class harmony, even pic-



tured the socialist transformation in a dreamy fashion—not as the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but as the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become aware of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparable from the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the working classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the experience of “socialist” participation in bourgeois Cabinets in Britain, France, Italy and other countries at the turn of the century.<sup>131</sup>

All his life Marx fought against this petty-bourgeois socialism, now revived in Russia by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties. He developed his theory of the class struggle consistently, down to the theory of political power, of the state.

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, the particular class whose economic conditions of existence prepare it for this task and provide it with the possibility and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie break up and disintegrate the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois groups, they weld together, unite and organise the proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of being the leader of *all* the working and exploited people, whom the bourgeoisie exploit, oppress and crush, often not less but more than they do the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an *independent* struggle for their emancipation.

The theory of the class struggle, applied by Marx to the question of the state and the socialist revolution, leads as a matter of course to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, i.e., of undivided power directly backed by the armed force of the people. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming the *ruling class*, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie, and of organising *all* the working and exploited people for the new economic system.

The proletariat needs state power, a centralised organisation of force, an organisation of violence, both to crush the resistance of the exploiters and to *lead* the enormous mass of the population—the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians—in the work of organising a socialist economy.

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organising the new system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organising their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. By contrast, the opportunism now prevailing trains the members of the workers'

party to be the representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the masses, "get along" fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, i.e., renounce their role as revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

Marx's theory of "the state, i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class", is inseparably bound up with the whole of his doctrine of the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat.

But since the proletariat needs the state as a *special* form of organisation of violence *against* the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie *for themselves*? The *Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this conclusion, and it is of this conclusion that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the revolution of 1848-51.

## 2. THE REVOLUTION SUMMED UP

Marx sums up his conclusions from the revolution of 1848-51, on the subject of the state we are concerned with, in the following argument contained in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

"But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's coup d'état], it had completed one half of its preparatory work. It is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it is perfecting the *executive power*, reducing it to its purest expression, isolating it, setting it up against itself as the sole object, *in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it* [italics ours]. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!

"This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its vast and ingenious state machinery, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system.

which it helped to hasten." The first French Revolution developed centralisation, "but at the same time" it increased "the extent, the attributes and the number of agents of governmental power. Napoleon completed this state machinery". The legitimate monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labour"....

"... Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of governmental power. *All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it* [italics ours]. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor." (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, pp. 98-99, fourth edition, Hamburg, 1907.)

In this remarkable argument Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with the *Communist Manifesto*. In the latter the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is extremely precise, definite, practical and palpable: all previous revolutions perfected the state machine, whereas it must be broken, smashed.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental point in the Marxist theory of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental point which has been completely *ignored* by the dominant official Social-Democratic parties and, indeed, *distorted* (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, Karl Kautsky.

The *Communist Manifesto* gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first winning political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organised as the ruling class"; and that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms. The question as to how, from the point of view of historical development, the replacement of the bourgeois by the proletarian state is to take place is not raised here.

This is the question Marx raises and answers in 1852. True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the historical experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851. Here, as everywhere else, his theory is a *summing up of ex-*

*perience, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.*

The problem of the state is put specifically: How did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it perform in the course of bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

The centralised state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism. Two institutions most characteristic of this state machine are the bureaucracy and the standing army. In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly show that the bourgeoisie are connected with these institutions by thousands of threads. Every worker's experience illustrates this connection in an extremely graphic and impressive manner. From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognise this connection. That is why it so easily grasps and so firmly learns the doctrine which shows the inevitability of this connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and flippantly deny, or still more flippantly admit "in general", while forgetting to draw appropriate practical conclusions.

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the internal antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which "chokes" all its vital pores. The Kautskyite opportunism now prevailing in official Social-Democracy considers the view that the state is a *parasitic organism* to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism. It goes without saying that this distortion of Marxism is of vast advantage to those philistines who have reduced socialism to the unheard-of disgrace of justifying and prettifying the imperialist war by applying to it the concept of "defence of the fatherland"; but it is unquestionably a distortion, nevertheless.

The development, perfection and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall of feudalism. In particular, it is the petty bourgeoisie who are attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and are largely subordinated to them through this apparatus, which provides the upper sections of the peasants, small artisans, tradesmen and the like with comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable jobs raising their holders *above* the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following February 27, 1917. The official posts which formerly were given by preference to the Black Hundreds have now become the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks

and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Nobody has really thought of introducing any serious reforms. Every effort has been made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly meets", and to steadily put off its convocation until after the war! But there has been no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly, in the matter of dividing the spoils, of getting the lucrative jobs of ministers, deputy ministers, governors-general, etc., etc.! The game of combinations that has been played in forming the government has been, in essence, only an expression of this division and redivision of the "spoils", which has been going on above and below, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between February 27 and August 27, 1917, can be summed up, objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official jobs accomplished and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few redistributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is "redistributed" among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the case of Russia), the more keenly aware the oppressed classes, and the proletariat at their head, become of their irreconcilable hostility to the *whole* of bourgeois society. Hence the need for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" among them, to intensify repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of coercion, i.e., the state machine. This course of events compels the revolution "*to concentrate all its forces of destruction*" against the state power, and to set itself the aim, not of improving the state machine but of *smashing and destroying* it.

It was not logical reasoning, but actual developments, the actual experience of 1848-51, that led to the matter being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet specifically raise the question of *what* was to take the place of the state machine to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for dealing with this question, which history placed on the agenda later on, in 1871. In 1852, all that could be established with the accuracy of scientific observation was that the proletarian revolution *had approached* the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state power, of "smashing" the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalise the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to deal with this question, let us recall a remark made by Engels and then examine the facts.

In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, Engels wrote:

"France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a finish, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarised have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country, since the Renaissance, of a unified monarchy based on social estates, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward-striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere." (P. 4, 1907 edition.)

The last remark is out of date inasmuch as since 1871 there has been a lull in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat, although, long as this lull may be, it does not at all preclude the possibility that in the coming proletarian revolution France may show herself to be the classic country of the class struggle to a finish.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the turn of the century. We shall see that the same process went on more slowly, in more varied forms, in a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" both in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland), and in the monarchies (Britain, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, etc.); on the other hand, a struggle for power among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distributed and redistributed the "spoils" of office, with the foundations of bourgeois society unchanged; and, lastly, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power", of its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in general. In the three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, the very same processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world.

Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the "state machine" and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the prole-

tariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.

World history is now undoubtedly leading, on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852, to the "concentration of all the forces" of the proletarian revolution on the "destruction" of the state machine.

What the proletariat will put in its place is suggested by the highly instructive material furnished by the Paris Commune

### 3. THE PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX IN 1852\*

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit*<sup>132</sup> (Vol. XXV, 2, p. 164), published extracts from Marx's letter to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852. This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation:

"And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular, historical phases in the development of production* (historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion), (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat* (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*."

In these words, Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity, first, the chief and radical difference between his theory and that of the foremost and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie; and, secondly, the essence of his theory of the state.

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx's theory is the class struggle. But this is wrong. And this wrong notion very often results in an opportunist distortion of Marxism and its falsification in a spirit acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the theory of the class struggle was created *not* by Marx, *but* by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and, generally speaking, it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the bounds of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism, distorting it, reducing it to something acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of

the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and recognition of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question as a *practical* issue, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyites (people who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats *repudiating* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August 1918, i.e., long after the first edition of the present book, is a perfect example of petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in deeds*, while hypocritically recognising it *in words* (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918).\*

Opportunism today, as represented by its principal spokesman, the ex-Marxist Karl Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterisation of the *bourgeois* position quoted above, for this opportunism limits recognition of the class struggle to the sphere of bourgeois relations. (Within this sphere, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"! ) Opportunism *does not extend* recognition of the class struggle to the cardinal point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, of the *overthrow* and the complete *abolition* of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably is a period of an unprecedentedly violent class struggle in unprecedentedly acute forms, and, consequently, during this period the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

Further. The essence of Marx's theory of the state has been mastered only by those who realise that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for every class society in general, not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but also for the entire *historical period* which separates capitalism from "classless society", from communism. Bourgeois states are most varied in form, but their essence is the same: all these states, whatever their form, in the final analysis are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism is certainly bound to yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.



### CHAPTER III

## THE STATE AND REVOLUTION. EXPERIENCE OF THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871. MARX'S ANALYSIS

### 1. WHAT MADE THE COMMUNARDS' ATTEMPT HEROIC?

It is well known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that any attempt to overthrow the government would be the folly of despair.<sup>133</sup> But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was forced upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavourable auguries. Marx did not persist in the pedantic attitude of condemning an "untimely" movement as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who in November 1905 wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle, but after December 1905 cried, in liberal fashion: "They should not have taken up arms."

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards, who, as he expressed it, "stormed heaven".<sup>134</sup> Although the mass revolutionary movement did not achieve its aim, he regarded it as a historic experience of enormous importance, as a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programmes and arguments. Marx endeavoured to analyse this experiment, to draw tactical lessons from it and re-examine his theory in the light of it.

The only "correction" Marx thought it necessary to make to the *Communist Manifesto* he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

The last preface to the new German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, signed by both its authors, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, say that the programme of the *Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become out-of-date", and they go on to say:

"...One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes'...."

The authors took the words that are in single quotation marks in this passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France*.

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous

importance that they introduced it as an important correction into the *Communist Manifesto*.

Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists, and its meaning probably is not known to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of the *Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully farther on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current, vulgar "interpretation" of Marx's famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasises the idea of slow development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

As a matter of fact, *the exact opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the "ready-made state machinery", and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it.

On April 12, 1871, i.e., just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

"If you look up the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I declare that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is the precondition for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 709.) (The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have appeared in Russian in no less than two editions, one of which I edited and supplied with a preface.)"

The words, "to smash the bureaucratic-military machine", briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism regarding the tasks of the proletariat during a revolution in relation to the state. And it is this lesson that has been not only completely ignored, but positively distorted by the prevailing, Kautskyite, "interpretation" of Marxism!

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we have quoted the relevant passage in full above.

It is interesting to note, in particular, two points in the above-quoted argument of Marx. First, he restricts his conclusion to the Continent. This was understandable in 1871, when Britain was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without a militarist clique and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Marx therefore excluded Britain, where a revolution, even a people's revolution, then seemed possible, and indeed was possible,

*without* the precondition of destroying the "ready-made state machinery".

Today, in 1917, at the time of the first great imperialist war, this restriction made by Marx is no longer valid. Both Britain and America, the biggest and the last representatives—in the whole world—of Anglo-Saxon "liberty", in the sense that they had no militarist cliques and bureaucracy, have completely sunk into the all-European filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions which subordinate everything to themselves, and suppress everything. Today, in Britain and America, too, "the precondition for every real people's revolution" is the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (made and brought up to "European", general imperialist, perfection in those countries in the years 1914-17).

Secondly, particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the bureaucratic-military state machine is "the precondition for every real *people's* revolution". This idea of a "people's" revolution seems strange coming from Marx, so that the Russian Plekhanovites and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the pen" on Marx's part. They have reduced Marxism to such a state of wretchedly liberal distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution, and even this antithesis they interpret in an utterly lifeless way.

If we take the revolutions of the twentieth century as examples we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are both bourgeois revolutions. Neither of them, however, is a "people's" revolution, since in neither does the mass of the people, their vast majority, come out actively, independently, with their own economic and political demands to any noticeable degree. By contrast, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 displayed no such "brilliant" successes as at times fell to the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, their majority, the very lowest social groups, crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently and stamped on the entire course of the revolution the imprint of *their* own demands, *their* attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed.

In Europe, in 1871, the proletariat did not constitute the majority of the people in any country on the Continent. A "people's" revolution, one actually sweeping the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the "people".

These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes, exploits them. To *smash* this machine, to *break it up*, is truly in the interest of the "people", of their majority, of the workers and most of the peasants, is "the precondition" for a free alliance of the poor peasants and the proletarians, whereas without such an alliance democracy is unstable and socialist transformation is impossible.

As is well known, the Paris Commune was actually working its way toward such an alliance, although it did not reach its goal owing to a number of circumstances, internal and external.

Consequently, in speaking of a "real people's revolution", Marx, without in the least discounting the special features of the petty bourgeoisie (he spoke a great deal about them and often), took strict account of the actual balance of class forces in most of the continental countries of Europe in 1871. On the other hand, he stated that the "smashing" of the state machine was required by the interests of both the workers and the peasants, that it united them, that it placed before them the common task of removing the "parasite" and of replacing it by something new.

By what exactly?

## 2. WHAT IS TO REPLACE THE SMASHED STATE MACHINE?

In 1847, in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx's answer to this question was as yet a purely abstract one; to be exact, it was an answer that indicated the tasks, but not the ways of accomplishing them. The answer given in the *Communist Manifesto* was that this machine was to be replaced by "the proletariat organised as the ruling class", by the "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx did not indulge in utopias; he expected the *experience* of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question as to the specific forms this organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class would assume and as to the exact manner in which this organisation would be combined with the most complete, most consistent "winning of the battle of democracy".

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meagre as it was, to the most careful analysis in *The Civil War in France*. Let us quote the most important passages of this work.

Originating from the Middle Ages, there developed in the nineteenth century "the centralised state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature". With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labour, "state power assumed more and more the character of a public force for the suppression of the working class, of a machine of class rule.

After every revolution, which marks an advance in the class struggle, the purely coercive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief". After the revolution of 1848-49, state power became "the national war instrument of capital against labour". The Second Empire consolidated this.

"The direct antithesis to the empire was the Commune." It was the "specific form" of "a republic that was not only to remove the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself. . . ."

What was this "specific" form of the proletarian, socialist republic? What was the state it began to create?

"...The first decree of the Commune . . . was the suppression of the standing army, and its replacement by the armed people. . . ."

This demand now figures in the programme of every party calling itself socialist. The real worth of their programmes, however, is best shown by the behaviour of our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, right after the revolution of February 27, actually refused to carry out this demand!

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of Paris, responsible and revocable at any time. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. . . . The police, which until then had been the instrument of the Government, was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable instrument of the Commune. So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*. The privileges and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the dignitaries themselves. . . . Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the instruments of the physical force of the old Government, the Commune proceeded at once to break the instrument of spiritual suppression, the power of the priests. . . . The judicial functionaries lost that sham independence . . . they were thenceforward to be elective, responsible, and revocable. . . ." <sup>135</sup>

The Commune, therefore, appears to have replaced the smashed state machine "only" by fuller democracy: abolition of the standing army; all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as

a matter of fact this "only" signifies a gigantic replacement of certain institutions by other institutions of a fundamentally different type. This is exactly a case of "quantity being transformed into quality": democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is at all conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois into proletarian democracy; from the state (=a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer the state proper.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune; and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. The organ of suppression, however, is here the majority of the population, and not a minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom and wage slavery. And since the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is *no longer necessary*! In this sense, the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, the chiefs of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power are performed by the people as a whole, the less need there is for the existence of this power.

In this connection, the following measures of the Commune, emphasised by Marx, are particularly noteworthy: the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges to officials, the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of "*workmen's wages*". This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to that of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "*special force*" for the suppression of a particular class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is on this particularly striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the ideas of Marx have been most completely ignored! In popular commentaries, the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. The thing done is to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naïveté", just as Christians, after their religion had been given the status of a state religion, "forgot" the "naïveté" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of high state officials seems to be "simply" a demand of naïve, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-Democrat Eduard Bernstein, has more than once repeated the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, and

like the present Kautskyites, he did not understand at all that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is *impossible* without a certain "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (for how else can the majority, and then the whole population without exception, proceed to discharge state functions?); and that, secondly, "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has *created* large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and *on this basis* the great majority of the functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such exceedingly simple operations of registration, filing and checking that they can be easily performed by every literate person, can quite easily be performed for ordinary "workmen's wages", and that these functions can (and must) be stripped of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur".

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall *at any time*, their salaries reduced to the level of ordinary "workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as a bridge leading from capitalism to socialism. These measures concern the reorganisation of the state, the purely political reorganisation of society; but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators" either being accomplished or in preparation, i.e., with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership.

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "made that catchword of all bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, by abolishing the two greatest sources of expenditure—the army and the officialdom."

From the peasants, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, only an insignificant few "rise to the top", "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, i.e., become either well-to-do, bourgeois, or officials in secure and privileged positions. In every capitalist country where there are peasants (as there are in most capitalist countries), the vast majority of them are oppressed by the government and long for its overthrow, long for "cheap" government. This can be achieved *only* by the proletariat; and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step towards the socialist reorganisation of the state.

### 3. ABOLITION OF PARLIAMENTARISM

"The Commune," Marx wrote, "was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time. . . .

"Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and repress [ver- und zertreten] the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business."

Owing to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism, this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism, made in 1871, also belongs now to the "forgotten words" of Marxism. The professional Cabinet Ministers and parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the "practical" socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully reasonable ground, they denounce *all* criticism of parliamentarism as "anarchism"!! It is not surprising that the proletariat of the "advanced" parliamentary countries, disgusted with such "socialists" as the Scheidemanns, Davids, Legiens, Sembats, Renaudels, Hendersons, Vanderveldes, Staunings, Brantings, Bissolatis and Co., has been with increasing frequency giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is merely the twin brother of opportunism.

For Marx, however, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the "pigsty" of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially when the situation was obviously not revolutionary; but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuinely revolutionary proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But if we deal with the question of the state, and if we consider parliamentarism as one of the institutions of the state, from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in *this* field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Once again we must say: the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that the



present-day "Social-Democrat" (i.e., present-day traitor to socialism) really cannot understand any criticism of parliamentarism other than anarchist or reactionary criticism.

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and the elective principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from talking shops into "working" bodies. "The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."

"A working, not a parliamentary, body"—this is a blow straight from the shoulder at the present-day parliamentarians and parliamentary "lap dogs" of Social-Democracy! Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to Britain, Norway and so forth—in these countries the real business of "state" is performed behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, chancelleries and General Staffs. Parliament is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the "common people". This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism came out at once, even before it managed to set up a real parliament. The heroes of rotten philistinism, such as the Skobelevs and Tseretelis, the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have even succeeded in polluting the Soviets after the fashion of the most disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism, in converting them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the "socialist" Ministers are fooling the credulous rustics with phrase-mongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent shuffle is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may in turn get near the "pie", the lucrative and honourable posts, and that, on the other hand, the "attention" of the people may be "engaged". Meanwhile the chancelleries and army staffs "do" the business of "state".

*Dyelo Naroda*, the organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in a leading article—with the matchless frankness of people of "good society", in which "all" are engaged in political prostitution—that even in the ministries headed by the "socialists" (save the mark!), the whole bureaucratic apparatus is in fact unchanged, is working in the old way and quite "freely" sabotaging revolutionary measures! Even without this admission, does not the actual history of the participation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government prove this? It is noteworthy, however, that in the ministerial company of the Cadets, the Chernovs, Rusanovs, Zenzinovs and the other editors of *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all sense of shame as to brazenly assert, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that in "their" ministries everything is unchanged!! Revolutionary-democratic

phrases to gull the rural Simple Simons, and bureaucracy and red tape to "gladden the hearts" of the capitalists—that is the *essence* of the "honest" coalition.

The Commune substitutes for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion does not degenerate into deception, for the parliamentarians themselves have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents. Representative institutions remain, but there is *no* parliamentarism here as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for the deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions, but we can and *must* imagine democracy without parliamentarism, if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our earnest and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and also the Scheidemanns and Legiens, the Sembats and Vanderveldes.

It is extremely instructive to note that, in speaking of the functions of *those* officials who are necessary for the Commune and for proletarian democracy, Marx compares them to the workers of "every other employer", that is, of the ordinary capitalist enterprise, with its "workers, foremen and accountants".

There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he made up or invented a "new" society. No, he studied the *birth* of the new society *out of* the old, and the forms of transition from the latter to the former, as a natural-historical process. He examined the actual experience of a mass proletarian movement and tried to draw practical lessons from it. He "learned" from the Commune, just as all the great revolutionary thinkers learned unhesitatingly from the experience of great movements of the oppressed classes, and never addressed them with pedantic "homilies" (such as Plekhanov's: "They should not have taken up arms" or Tsereteli's: "A class must limit itself").

Abolishing the bureaucracy at once, everywhere and completely, is out of the question. It is a utopia. But to *smash* the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will make possible the gradual abolition of all bureaucracy—this is *not* a utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat.

Capitalism simplifies the functions of "state" administration; it makes it possible to cast "bossing" aside and to confine the whole matter to the organisation of the proletarians (as the ruling class),

which will hire "workers, foremen and accountants" in the name of the whole of society.

We are not utopians, we do not "dream" of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination. These anarchist dreams, based upon incomprehension of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until people are different. No, we want the socialist revolution with people as they are now, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control and "foremen and accountants".

The subordination, however, must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited and working people, i.e., to the proletariat. A beginning can and must be made at once, overnight, to replace the specific "bossing" of state officials by the simple functions of "foremen and accountants", functions which are already fully within the ability of the average, town dweller and can well be performed for "workmen's wages".

*We*, the workers, shall organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, relying on our own experience as workers, establishing strict, iron discipline backed up by the state power of the armed workers. We shall reduce the role of state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid "foremen and accountants" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task, this is what we can and must *start* with in accomplishing the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order—an order without inverted commas, an order bearing no similarity to wage slavery—an order under which the functions of control and accounting, becoming more and more simple, will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special section of the population.

A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the *postal service* an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true. At present the postal service is a business organised on the lines of a state-*capitalist* monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organisations of a similar type, in which, standing over the "common" people, who are overworked and starved, one has the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. Once we have overthrown the capitalists, crushed the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, and smashed the bureaucratic machine of the modern state, we shall have a splendidly-equipped mechanism,

freed from the "parasite", a mechanism which can very well be set going by the united workers themselves, who will hire technicians, foremen and accountants, and pay them *all*, as indeed *all* "state" officials in general, workmen's wages. Here is a concrete, practical task which can immediately be fulfilled in relation to all trusts, a task whose fulfilment will rid the working people of exploitation, a task which takes account of what the Commune had already begun to practise (particularly in building up the state).

To organise the *whole* economy on the lines of the postal service so that the technicians, foremen and accountants, as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than "a workman's wage", all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat—this is our immediate aim. This is the state and this is the economic foundation we need. This is what will bring about the abolition of parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the labouring classes of the bourgeoisie's prostitution of these institutions.

#### 4. ORGANISATION OF NATIONAL UNITY

"In a brief sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop, it states explicitly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest village. . . ." The communes were to elect the "National Delegation" in Paris.

"...The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been deliberately mis-stated, but were to be transferred to communal, i.e., strictly responsible, officials.

"...National unity was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, organised by the communal constitution; it was to become a reality by the destruction of state power which posed as the embodiment of that unity yet wanted to be independent of, and superior to, the nation, on whose body it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority claiming the right to stand above society, and restored to the responsible servants of society."

The extent to which the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy have failed—perhaps it would be more true to say, have refused—to understand these observations of Marx is best shown by that book of Herostratean fame of the renegade Bernstein, *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of the Social-Democrats*. It is in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein

wrote that "as far as its political content is concerned", this programme "displays, in all its essential features, the greatest similarity to the federalism of Proudhon. . . . In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the 'petty-bourgeois' Proudhon [Bernstein places the word "petty-bourgeois" in inverted commas to make it sound ironical] on these points, their lines of reasoning run as close as could be." Of course, Bernstein continues, the importance of the municipalities is growing, but "it seems doubtful to me whether the first job of democracy would be such a dissolution [Auflösung] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [Umwandlung] of their organisation as is visualised by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a National Assembly from delegates of the provincial or district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the communes), so that consequently the previous mode of national representation would disappear." (Bernstein, *Premises*, German edition, 1899, pp. 134 and 136.)

To confuse Marx's views on the "destruction of state power, a parasitic excrescence", with Proudhon's federalism is positively monstrous! But it is no accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx does not speak here at all about federalism as opposed to centralism, but about smashing the old, bourgeois state machine which exists in all bourgeois countries.

The only thing that does occur to the opportunist is what he sees around him, in an environment of petty-bourgeois philistinism and "reformist" stagnation, namely, only "municipalities"! The opportunist has even grown out of the habit of thinking about proletarian revolution.

It is ridiculous. But the remarkable thing is that nobody argued with Bernstein on this point. Bernstein has been refuted by many, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European literature, but neither of them has said *anything* about *this* distortion of Marx by Bernstein.

The opportunist has so much forgotten how to think in a revolutionary way and to dwell on revolution that he attributes "federalism" to Marx, whom he confuses with the founder of anarchism, Proudhon. As for Kautsky and Plekhanov, who claim to be orthodox Marxists and defenders of the theory of revolutionary Marxism, they are silent on this point! Here is one of the roots of the extreme vulgarisation of the views on the difference between Marxism and anarchism, which is characteristic of both the Kautskyites and the opportunists, and which we shall discuss again later.

There is not a trace of federalism in Marx's above-quoted observations on the experience of the Commune. Marx agreed with Proudhon on the very point that the opportunist Bernstein did not

see. Marx disagreed with Proudhon on the very point on which Bernstein found a similarity between them.

Marx agreed with Proudhon in that they both stood for the "smashing" of the modern state machine. Neither the opportunists nor the Kautskyites wish to see the similarity of views on this point between Marxism and anarchism (both Proudhon and Bakunin) because this is where they have departed from Marxism.

Marx disagreed both with Proudhon and Bakunin precisely on the question of federalism (not to mention the dictatorship of the proletariat). Federalism as a principle follows logically from the petty-bourgeois views of anarchism. Marx was a centralist. There is no departure whatever from centralism in his observations just quoted. Only those who are imbued with the philistine "superstitious belief" in the state can mistake the destruction of the bourgeois state machine for the destruction of centralism!

Now if the proletariat and the poor peasants take state power into their own hands, organise themselves quite freely in communes, and *unite* the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists, and in transferring the privately-owned railways, factories, land and so on to the *entire* nation, to the whole of society, won't that be centralism? Won't that be the most consistent democratic centralism and, moreover, proletarian centralism?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive of the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary amalgamation of the communes into a nation, of the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes, for the purpose of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all philistines, Bernstein pictures centralism as something which can be imposed and maintained solely from above, and solely by the bureaucracy and the military clique.

As though foreseeing that his views might be distorted, Marx expressly emphasised that the charge that the Commune had wanted to destroy national unity, to abolish the central authority, was a deliberate fraud. Marx purposely used the words: "National unity was . . . to be organised", so as to oppose conscious, democratic, proletarian centralism to bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But there are none so deaf as those who will not hear. And the very thing the opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy do not want to hear about is the destruction of state power, the amputation of the parasitic excrescence.

## 5. ABOLITION OF THE PARASITE STATE

We have already quoted Marx's words on this subject, and we must now supplement them.

"...It is generally the fate of new historical creations," he wrote, "to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks [*bricht*, smashes] the modern state power, has been regarded as a revival of the medieval communes... as a federation of small states (as Montesquieu and the Girondins<sup>136</sup> visualised it)... as an exaggerated form of the old struggle against over-centralisation...."

"...The Communal Constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by that parasitic excrescence, the 'state', feeding upon and hampering the free movement of society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France...."

"...The Communal Constitution would have brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them, in the town working men, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local self-government, but no longer as a counterpoise to state power, now become superfluous."

"Breaking state power", which was a "parasitic excrescence"; its "amputation", its "smashing"; "state power, now become superfluous"—these are the expressions Marx used in regard to the state when appraising and analysing the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago; and now one has to engage in excavations, as it were, in order to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the mass of the people. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution which Marx lived through were forgotten just when the time for the next great proletarian revolutions had arrived.

"...The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected, and the multiplicity of interests which expressed themselves in it show that it was a thoroughly flexible political form, while all previous forms of government had been essentially repressive. Its true secret was this: it was essentially a *working-class government*, the result of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which the economic emancipation of labour could be accomplished...."

"Except on this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion...."

The utopians busied themselves with "discovering" political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to

take place. The anarchists dismissed the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-Democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the limit which should not be overstepped; they battered their foreheads praying before this "model", and denounced as anarchism every desire to *break* these forms.

Marx deduced from the whole history of socialism and the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from state to non-state) would be the "proletariat organised as the ruling class". Marx, however, did not set out to *discover* the political forms of this future stage. He limited himself to carefully observing French history, to analysing it, and to drawing the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, namely, that matters were moving towards the *destruction* of the bourgeois state machine.

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth, Marx, in spite of its failure, in spite of its short life and patent weakness, began to study the forms it had *discovered*.

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which the economic emancipation of labour can take place.

The Commune is the first attempt by a proletarian revolution to *smash* the bourgeois state machine; and it is the political form "at last discovered", by which the smashed state machine can and must be *replaced*.

We shall see further on that the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions, continue the work of the Commune and confirm Marx's brilliant historical analysis.

#### CHAPTER IV CONTINUATION. SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATIONS BY ENGELS

Marx gave the fundamentals concerning the significance of the experience of the Commune. Engels returned to the same subject time and again, and explained Marx's analysis and conclusions, sometimes elucidating *other* aspects of the question with such power and vividness that it is necessary to deal with his explanations specially.

##### 1. THE HOUSING QUESTION

In his work, *The Housing Question* (1872),<sup>137</sup> Engels already took into account the experience of the Commune, and dealt several times with the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state. It



is interesting to note that the treatment of this specific subject clearly revealed, on the one hand, points of similarity between the proletarian state and the present state—points that warrant speaking of the state in both cases—and, on the other hand, points of difference between them, or the transition to the destruction of the state.

“How is the housing question to be settled, then? In present-day society, it is settled just as any other social question: by the gradual economic levelling of demand and supply, a settlement which reproduces the question itself again and again and therefore is no settlement. How a social revolution would settle this question not only depends on the circumstances in each particular case, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, one of the most fundamental of which is the abolition of the antithesis between town and country. As it is not our task to create utopian systems for the organisation of the future society, it would be more than idle to go into the question here. But one thing is certain: there is already a sufficient quantity of houses in the big cities to remedy immediately all real ‘housing *shortage*’, provided they are used judiciously. This can naturally only occur through the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses homeless workers or workers overcrowded in their present homes. As soon as the proletariat has won political power, such a measure prompted by concern for the common good will be just as easy to carry out as are other expropriations and billetings by the present-day state.” (German edition, 1887, p. 22.)

The change in the form of state power is not examined here, but only the content of its activity. Expropriations and billetings take place by order even of the present state. From the formal point of view, the proletarian state will also “order” the occupation of dwellings and expropriation of houses. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

“...It must be pointed out that the ‘actual seizure’ of all the instruments of labour, the taking possession of industry as a whole by the working people, is the exact opposite of the Proudhonist ‘redemption’. In the latter case the individual worker becomes the owner of the dwelling, the peasant farm, the instruments of labour; in the former case, the ‘working people’ remain the collective owners of the houses, factories

and instruments of labour, and will hardly permit their use, at least during a transitional period, by individuals or associations without compensation for the cost. In the same way, the abolition of property in land is not the abolition of ground rent but its transfer, if in a modified form, to society. The actual seizure of all the instruments of labour by the working people, therefore, does not at all preclude the retention of rent relations." (P. 68.)

We shall examine the question touched upon in this passage, namely, the economic basis for the withering away of the state, in the next chapter. Engels expresses himself most cautiously, saying that the proletarian state would "hardly" permit the use of houses without payment, "at least during a transitional period". The letting of houses owned by the whole people to individual families presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and the employment of some standard in allotting the housing. All this calls for a certain form of state, but it does not at all call for a special military and bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially privileged positions. The transition to a situation in which it will be possible to supply dwellings rent-free depends on the complete "withering away" of the state.

Speaking of the Blanquists' adoption of the fundamental position of Marxism after the Commune and under the influence of its experience, Engels, in passing, formulates this position as follows:

"... Necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state. . . ." (P. 55.)

Addicts to hair-splitting criticism, or bourgeois "exterminators of Marxism", will perhaps see a contradiction between this *recognition* of the "abolition of the state" and repudiation of this formula as an anarchist one in the above passage from *Anti-Dühring*. It would not be surprising if the opportunists classed Engels, too, as an "anarchist", for it is becoming increasingly common with the social-chauvinists to accuse the internationalists of anarchism.

Marxism has always taught that with the abolition of classes the state will also be abolished. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state" in *Anti-Dühring* accuses the anarchists not simply of favouring the abolition of the state, but of preaching that the state can be abolished "overnight".

As the now prevailing "Social-Democratic" doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be particularly useful to recall a certain controversy in which Marx and Engels came out against the anarchists.

## 2. CONTROVERSY WITH THE ANARCHISTS

This controversy took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists,<sup>138</sup> "autonomists" or "anti-authoritarians", to an Italian socialist annual, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German in *Neue Zeit*.<sup>139</sup>

"If the political struggle of the working class assumes revolutionary forms," wrote Marx, ridiculing the anarchists for their repudiation of politics, "and if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar everyday needs and to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, they give the state a revolutionary and transient form, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state. . . ." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XXXII, 1, 1913-14, p. 40.)<sup>140</sup>

It was solely against this kind of "abolition" of the state that Marx fought in refuting the anarchists! He did not at all oppose the view that the state would disappear when classes disappeared, or that it would be abolished when classes were abolished. What he did oppose was the proposition that the workers should renounce the use of arms, organised violence, *that is, the state*, which is to serve to "crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie".

To prevent the true meaning of his struggle against anarchism from being distorted, Marx expressly emphasised the "revolutionary and *transient* form" of the state which the proletariat needs. The proletariat needs the state only temporarily. We do not at all differ with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as the *aim*. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources and methods of state power *against* the exploiters, just as the temporary dictatorship of the oppressed class is necessary for the abolition of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his case against the anarchists: After overthrowing the yoke of the capitalists, should the workers "lay down their arms", or use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against another if not a "transient form" of state?

Let every Social-Democrat ask himself: Is *that* how he has been posing the question of the state in controversy with the anarchists? Is *that* how it has been posed by the vast majority of the official socialist parties of the Second International?

Engels expounds the same ideas in much greater detail and still more popularly. First of all he ridicules the muddled ideas

of the Proudhonists, who called themselves "anti-authoritarians", i.e., repudiated all authority, all subordination, all power. Take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels: is it not clear that not one of these complex technical establishments, based on the use of machinery and the systematic co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without a certain amount of authority or power?

"... When I counter the most rabid anti-authoritarians with these arguments, the only answer they can give me is the following: Oh, that's true, except that here it is not a question of authority with which we vest our delegates, *but of a commission!* These people imagine they can change a thing by changing its name. . . ."141

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolutes, and adding that the sphere of application of machinery and large-scale production is steadily expanding, Engels passes from the general discussion of authority to the question of the state.

"Had the autonomists," he wrote, "contented themselves with saying that the social organisation of the future would allow authority only within the bounds which the conditions of production make inevitable, one could have come to terms with them. But they are blind to all facts that make authority necessary and they passionately fight the word.

"Why do the anti-authoritarians not confine themselves to crying out against political authority, the state? All socialists are agreed that the state, and with it political authority, will disappear as a result of the coming social revolution, that is, that public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions of watching over social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state be abolished at one stroke, even before the social relations that gave birth to it have been destroyed. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority.

"Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is an act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, all of which are highly authoritarian means. And the victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune

have lasted more than a day if it had not used the authority of the armed people against the bourgeoisie? Cannot we, on the contrary, blame it for having made too little use of that authority? Therefore, one of two things: either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion. Or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve only reaction." (P. 39.)<sup>142</sup>

This argument touches upon questions which should be examined in connection with the relationship between politics and economics during the withering away of the state (the next chapter is devoted to this). These questions are: the transformation of public functions from political into simple functions of administration, and the "political state". This last term, one particularly liable to cause misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state: at a certain stage of this process, the state which is withering away may be called a non-political state.

Again, the most remarkable thing in this argument of Engels is the way he states his case against the anarchists. Social-Democrats, claiming to be disciples of Engels, have argued on this subject against the anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have *not* argued as Marxists could and should. The anarchist idea of the abolition of the state is muddled and *non-revolutionary*—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the anarchists refuse to see.

The usual criticism of anarchism by present-day Social-Democrats has boiled down to the purest philistine banality: "We recognise the state, whereas the anarchists do not!" Naturally, such banality cannot but repel workers who are at all capable of thinking and revolutionary-minded. What Engels says is different. He stresses that all socialists recognise that the state will disappear as a result of the socialist revolution. He then deals specifically with the question of the revolution—the very question which, as a rule, the Social-Democrats evade out of opportunism, leaving it, so to speak, exclusively for the anarchists "to work out". And when dealing with this question, Engels takes the bull by the horns; he asks: should not the Commune have made *more* use of the *revolutionary* power of the *state*, that is, of the proletariat armed and organised as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-Democracy usually dismissed the question of the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with a philistine sneer, or, at best, with the sophistic evasion: "The future will show." And the anarchists were justified

in saying about such Social-Democrats that they were failing in their task of giving the workers a revolutionary education. Engels draws upon the experience of the last proletarian revolution precisely for the purpose of making a most concrete study of what should be done by the proletariat, and in what manner, in relation to both the banks and the state.

### 3. LETTER TO BEBEL

One of the most, if not *the* most, remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels's letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may observe in parenthesis, was, as far as we know, first published by Bebel in the second volume of his memoirs (*Aus meinem Leben*), which appeared in 1911, i.e., thirty-six years after the letter had been written and sent.

Engels wrote to Bebel criticising that same draft of the Gotha Programme which Marx criticised in his famous letter to Bracke.<sup>143</sup> Referring specially to the question of the state, Engels said:

"The free people's state has been transformed into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense, a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens, hence a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists to the point of disgust, although already Marx's book against Proudhon<sup>144</sup> and later the *Communist Manifesto* say plainly that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state dissolves of itself (*sich auflöst*) and disappears. As the state is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, to hold down one's adversaries by force, it is sheer nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state'; so long as the proletariat still *needs* the state, it does not need it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore propose replacing *state* everywhere by *Gemeinwesen*, a good old German word which can very well take the place of the French word *commune*." (Pp. 321-22 of the German original)

It should be borne in mind that this letter refers to the party programme which Marx criticised in a letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that at the time Engels was living with Marx in London. Consequently, when he says "we" in the last sentence, Engels

undoubtedly, in his own as well as in Marx's name, suggests to the leader of the German workers' party that the word "state" *be struck out of the programme* and replaced by the word "community".

What a howl about "anarchism" would be raised by the leading lights of present-day "Marxism", which has been falsified for the convenience of the opportunists, if such an amendment of the programme were suggested to them!

Let them howl. This will earn them the praises of the bourgeoisie.

And we shall go on with our work. In revising the programme of our Party, we must by all means take the advice of Engels and Marx into consideration in order to come nearer the truth, to restore Marxism by ridding it of distortions, to guide the struggle of the working class for its emancipation more correctly. Certainly no one opposed to the advice of Engels and Marx will be found among the Bolsheviks. The only difficulty that may perhaps arise will be in regard to the term. In German there are two words meaning "community", of which Engels used the one which does *not* denote a single community, but their totality, a system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and we may have to choose the French word "commune", although this also has its drawbacks.

"The Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is the most theoretically important statement Engels makes. After what has been said above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune *was ceasing* to be a state since it had to suppress, not the majority of the population, but a minority (the exploiters). It had smashed the bourgeois state machine. In place of a *special* coercive force the population itself came on the scene. All this was a departure from the state in the proper sense of the word. And had the Commune become firmly established, all traces of the state in it would have "withered away" of themselves; it would not have had to "abolish" the institutions of the state—they would have ceased to function as they ceased to have anything to do.

"The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists." In saying this, Engels above all has in mind Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social-Democrats. Engels admits that these attacks were justified *insofar* as the "people's state" was as much an absurdity and as much a departure from socialism as the "free people's state". Engels tried to put the struggle of the German Social-Democrats against the anarchists on the right lines, to make this struggle correct in principle, to rid it of opportunist prejudices concerning the "state". Unfortunately, Engels's letter was pigeon-holed for thirty-six years. We shall see farther

on that, even after this letter was published, Kautsky persisted in virtually the same mistakes against which Engels had warned.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter dated September 21, 1875, in which he wrote, among other things, that he "fully agreed" with Engels's opinion of the draft programme, and that he had reproached Liebknecht with readiness to make concessions (p. 334 of the German edition of Bebel's memoirs, Vol. II). But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Our Aims*, we find there views on the state that are absolutely wrong.

"The state must ... be transformed from one based on *class rule* into a *people's state*." (*Unsere Ziele*, German edition, 1896, p. 14)

This was printed in the *ninth* (the ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet! It is not surprising that opportunist views on the state, so persistently repeated, were absorbed by the German Social-Democrats, especially as Engels's revolutionary interpretations had been safely pigeon-holed, and all the conditions of life were such as to "wean" them from revolution for a long time.

#### 4. CRITICISM OF THE DRAFT OF THE ERFURT PROGRAMME

In analysing Marxist teachings on the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme,<sup>145</sup> sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, and published only ten years later in *Neue Zeit*, cannot be ignored; for it is with the *opportunist* views of the Social-Democrats on questions of *state* organisation that this criticism is mainly concerned.

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on economic questions, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the various changes occurring in modern capitalism, and how for this reason he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our present, the imperialist, epoch. Here is that observation: referring to the word "planlessness" (*Planlosigkeit*), used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels wrote:

"When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolise, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness." (*Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 8.)

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly *capitalism*. The latter must be emphasised because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state-monopoly capitalism is *no longer*



capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide, and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under *capitalism*—at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt. The "proximity" of *such* capitalism to socialism should serve genuine representatives of the proletariat as an argument proving the proximity, facility, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not at all as an argument for tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution and the efforts to make capitalism look more attractive, something which all reformists are trying to do.

But to return to the question of the state. In his letter Engels makes three particularly valuable suggestions: first, in regard to the republic; second, in regard to the connection between the national question and state organisation, and, third, in regard to local self-government.

In regard to the republic, Engels made this the focal point of his criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme. And when we recall the importance which the Erfurt Programme acquired for all the Social-Democrats of the world, and that it became the model for the whole Second International, we may say without exaggeration that Engels thereby criticised the opportunism of the whole Second International.

"The political demands of the draft," Engels wrote, "have one great fault. *It lacks* [Engels's italics] precisely what should have been said."

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German Constitution is, strictly speaking, a copy of the extremely reactionary Constitution of 1850, that the Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, "the fig leaf of absolutism" and that to wish "to transform all the instruments of labour into common property" on the basis of a constitution which legalises the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states is an "obvious absurdity".

"To touch on that is dangerous, however," Engels added, knowing only too well that it was impossible legally to include in the programme the demand for a republic in Germany. But he refused to merely accept this obvious consideration which satisfied "everybody". He continued: "Nevertheless, somehow or other, the thing has to be attacked. How necessary this is is shown precisely at the present time by opportunism, which is gaining ground [einreissende] in a large

section of the Social-Democratic press. Fearing a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law, or recalling all manner of overhasty pronouncements made during the reign of that law, they now want the Party to find the present legal order in Germany adequate for putting through all Party demands by peaceful means. . . ."

Engels particularly stressed the fundamental fact that the German Social-Democrats were prompted by fear of a renewal of the Anti-Socialist Law,<sup>146</sup> and explicitly described it as opportunism; he declared that precisely because there was no republic and no freedom in Germany, the dreams of a "peaceful" path were perfectly absurd. Engels was careful not to tie his hands. He admitted that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive" (only "conceive"! ) of a peaceful development towards socialism, but in Germany, he repeated,

"... in Germany, where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to advocate such a thing in Germany, where, moreover, there is no need to do so, means removing the fig leaf from absolutism and becoming oneself a screen for its nakedness."

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, which pigeon-holed this advice, have really proved to be a screen for absolutism.

"... In the long run such a policy can only lead one's own party astray. They push general, abstract political questions into the foreground, thereby concealing the immediate concrete questions, which at the moment of the first great events, the first political crisis, automatically pose themselves. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the party suddenly proves helpless and that uncertainty and discord on the most decisive issues reign in it because these issues have never been discussed? . . .

"This forgetting of the great, the principal considerations for the momentary interests of the day, this struggling and striving for the success of the moment regardless of later consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be 'honestly' meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and 'honest' opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all. . . .

"If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power in the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship

of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown. . . ."

Engels repeated here in a particularly striking form the fundamental idea which runs through all of Marx's works, namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic, without in the least abolishing the rule of capital, and, therefore, the oppression of the masses and the class struggle, inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding and intensification of this struggle that, as soon as it becomes possible to meet the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is realised inevitably and solely through the dictatorship of the proletariat, through the leadership of those masses by the proletariat. These, too, are "forgotten words" of Marxism for the whole of the Second International, and the fact that they have been forgotten was demonstrated with particular vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party during the first six months of the Russian revolution of 1917.

On the subject of a federal republic, in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote:

"What should take the place of present-day Germany [with its reactionary monarchical Constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states, a division which perpetuates all the specific features of "Prussianism" instead of dissolving them in Germany as a whole]? In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States, a federal republic is still, on the whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in Britain where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation already exist side by side. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federalisation on the Swiss model would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a union state from a completely unified state: first, that each member state—each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, whether large or small, votes as such." In Germany, the union state is the transition to the completely unified state, and the "revolution from above" of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed but supplemented by a "movement from below".

Far from being indifferent to the forms of state, Engels, on the contrary, tried to analyse the transitional forms with the utmost thoroughness in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete historical peculiarities of each particular case, *from what and to what* the given transitional form is passing.

Approaching the matter from the standpoint of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transition from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a “step forward” under certain special conditions. And among these special conditions, he puts the national question to the fore.

Although mercilessly criticising the reactionary nature of small states, and the screening of this by the national question in certain concrete cases, Engels, like Marx, never betrayed the slightest desire to brush aside the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists, who proceed from their perfectly justified opposition to the narrow philistine nationalism of “their” little states, are often guilty.

Even in regard to Britain, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have “put an end” to the national question in the various small divisions of the country—even in regard to that country, Engels reckoned with the plain fact that the national question was not yet a thing of the past, and recognised in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a “step forward”. Of course, there is not the slightest hint here of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or renouncing the most determined advocacy of, and struggle for, a unified and centralised democratic republic.

But Engels did not at all mean democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which this term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, the anarchists among the latter. His idea of centralism did not in the least preclude such broad local self-government as would combine the voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the “communes” and districts, and the complete elimination of all bureaucratic practices and all “ordering” from above. Carrying forward the programme views of Marxism on the state, Engels wrote:

“So, then, a unified republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 without the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each French department, each commune [Gemeinde], enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this

is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organised and how we can manage without a bureaucracy has been shown to us by America and the first French Republic, and is being shown even today by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial [regional] and communal self-government of this type is far freer than, for instance, Swiss federalism, under which, it is true, the canton is very independent in relation to the Bund [i.e., the federated state as a whole], but is also independent in relation to the district [Bezirk] and the commune. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors [Bezirksstatthalter] and prefects—which is unknown in English-speaking countries and which we want to abolish here as resolutely in the future as the Prussian Landräte and Regierungsräte” (commissioners, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above). Accordingly, Engels proposes the following wording for the self-government clause in the programme: “Complete self-government for the provinces [gubernias or regions], districts and communes through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state.”

I have already had occasion to point out—in *Pravda* (No. 68, May 28, 1917),\* which was suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other “socialist” Ministers—how on this point (of course, not on this point alone by any means) our pseudo-socialist representatives of pseudo-revolutionary pseudo-democracy have made glaring departures from democracy. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a “coalition” to the imperialist bourgeoisie have remained deaf to this criticism.

It is extremely important to note that Engels, armed with facts, disproved by a most precise example the prejudice which is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralised republic. This is wrong. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralised French Republic of 1792-98 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralised republic gave *more* freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the *greatest* amount of local, regional and other freedom known in history was accorded by a *centralised* and not by a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid in our Party propaganda and agitation to this fact, as, indeed, to the whole question of the federal and the centralised republic and local self-government.

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 536-38.—Ed.

## 5. THE 1891 PREFACE TO MARX'S *THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE*

In his preface to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this preface is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in *Neue Zeit*), Engels, in addition to some interesting incidental remarks on questions concerning the attitude towards the state, gave a remarkably vivid summary of the lessons of the Commune.<sup>147</sup> This summary, made more profound by the entire experience of the twenty years that separated the author from the Commune, and directed expressly against the "superstitious belief in the state" so widespread in Germany, may justly be called the *last word* of Marxism on the question under consideration.

In France, Engels observed, the workers emerged with arms from every revolution; "therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois, who were at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers".

This summary of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the matter—among other things, on the question of the state (*has the oppressed class arms?*)—is here remarkably well grasped. It is precisely this essence that is most often evaded both by professors influenced by bourgeois ideology, and by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian revolution of 1917, the honour (Cavaignac honour) of blabbing this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, would-be Marxist, Tsereteli. In his "historic" speech of June 11, Tsereteli blurted out that the bourgeoisie were determined to disarm the Petrograd workers—presenting, of course, this decision as his own, and as a necessity for the "state" in general!<sup>148</sup>

Tsereteli's historic speech of June 11 will, of course, serve every historian of the revolution of 1917 as a graphic illustration of how the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik bloc, led by Mr. Tsereteli, deserted to the bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat.

Another incidental remark of Engels's, also connected with the question of the state, deals with religion. It is well known that the German Social-Democrats, as they degenerated and became increasingly opportunist, slipped more and more frequently into the philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula: "Religion is to be declared a private matter." That is, this formula was twisted to mean that religion was a private matter *even for the party* of the revolutionary proletariat!! It was against this complete betrayal of the revolutionary programme of the proletariat

that Engels vigorously protested. In 1891 he saw only the *very feeble* beginnings of opportunism in his party, and, therefore, he expressed himself with extreme caution:

“As almost only workers, or recognised representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realisation of the principle that *in relation to the state* religion is a purely private matter—or the Commune promulgated decrees which were in the direct interest of the working class and in part cut deeply into the old order of society.”

Engels deliberately emphasised the words “in relation to the state”, as a straight thrust at German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter *in relation to the party*, thus degrading the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the level of the most vulgar “free-thinking” philistinism, which is prepared to allow a non-denominational status, but which renounces the *party* struggle against the opium of religion which stupefies the people.

The future historian of the German Social-Democrats, in tracing the roots of their shameful bankruptcy in 1914, will find a fair amount of interesting material on this question, beginning with the evasive declarations in the articles of the party's ideological leader, Kautsky, which throw the door wide open to opportunism, and ending with the attitude of the party towards the “Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung” (the “Leave-the-Church” movement) in 1913.<sup>149</sup>

But let us see how, twenty years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat.

Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance:

“...It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralised government, army, political police, bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and which every new government had since then taken over as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents—it was this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had fallen in Paris.

“From the very outset the Commune had to recognise that the working class, once in power, could not go on managing with the old state machine; that in order not to lose again its only just gained supremacy, this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old machinery

of oppression previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials, by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any time. . . .”

Engels emphasised once again that not only under a monarchy, but *also in a democratic republic* the state remains a state, i.e., it retains its fundamental distinguishing feature of transforming the officials, the “servants of society”, its organs, into the *masters* of society.

“Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune used two infallible means. In the first place, it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned. subject to recall at any time by the electors. And, in the second place, it paid all officials, high or low, only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs.\* In this way a dependable barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to representative bodies, which were added besides. . . .”

Engels here approached the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy, on the one hand, is *transformed* into socialism and, on the other, *demand*s socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, it is necessary to convert the functions of the civil service into the simple operations of control and accounting that are within the scope and ability of the vast majority of the population, and, subsequently, of every single individual. And if careerism is to be abolished completely, it must be made *impossible* for “honourable” though profitless posts in the Civil Service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as *constantly* happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

Engels, however, did not make the mistake some Marxists make in dealing, for example, with the question of the right of nations to self-determination, when they argue that it is impossible under capitalism and will be superfluous under socialism. This seemingly clever but actually incorrect statement might be

\* Nominally about 2,400 rubles or, according to the present rate of exchange, about 6,000 rubles. The action of those Bolsheviks who propose that a salary of 9,000 rubles be paid to members of municipal councils, for instance, instead of a maximum salary of 6,000 rubles—quite an adequate sum—*throughout the state*, is inexcusable.<sup>150</sup>



made in regard to *any* democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials, because fully consistent democracy is impossible under capitalism, and under socialism all democracy *will wither away*.

This is a sophism like the old joke about a man becoming bald by losing one more hair.

To develop democracy *to the utmost*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them *by practice*, and so forth—all this is one of the component tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no kind of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be “taken separately”; it will be “taken together” with other things, it will exert its influence on economic life as well, will stimulate *its* transformation; and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. This is the dialectics of living history.

Engels continued:

“...This shattering [Sprengung] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and truly democratic one is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary to touch briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has passed from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical conception, the state is the ‘realisation of the idea’, or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice are, or should be, realised. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily since people are accustomed from childhood to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after other than as they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its lucratively positioned officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy. And at best it is an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class supremacy, whose worst sides the victorious proletariat will have to lop off as speedily as possible, just as the Commune had to, until a generation reared in new, free social conditions is able to discard the entire lumber of the state.”

Engels warned the Germans not to forget the principles of socialism with regard to the state in general in connection with the substitution of a republic for the monarchy. His warnings now read like a veritable lesson to the Tseretelis and Chernovs, who in their "coalition" practice have revealed a superstitious belief in, and a superstitious reverence for, the state!

Two more remarks. 1. Engels's statement that in a democratic republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" by no means signifies that the *form* of oppression makes no difference to the proletariat, as some anarchists "teach". A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression vastly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of classes in general.

2. Why will only a new generation be able to discard the entire lumber of the state? This question is bound up with that of overcoming democracy, with which we shall deal now.

## 6. ENGELS ON THE OVERCOMING OF DEMOCRACY

Engels came to express his views on this subject when establishing that the term "Social-Democrat" was *scientifically* wrong.

In a preface to an edition of his articles of the seventies on various subjects, mostly on "international" questions (*Internationales aus dem Volksstaat*), dated January 3, 1894, i.e., written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word "Communist", and *not* "Social-Democrat", because at that time the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans<sup>151</sup> in Germany called themselves Social-Democrats.

"... For Marx and myself," continued Engels, "it was therefore absolutely impossible to use such a loose term to characterise our special point of view. Today things are different, and the word ["Social-Democrat"] may perhaps pass muster [mag passieren], inexact [*unpassend*, unsuitable] though it still is for a party whose economic programme is not merely socialist in general, but downright communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state and, consequently, democracy as well. The names of *real* [Engels's italics] political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate: the party develops while the name stays."<sup>152</sup>

The dialectician Engels remained true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I, he said, had a splendid, scientifically

exact name for the party, but there was no real party, i.e., no mass proletarian party. Now (at the end of the nineteenth century) there was a real party, but its name was scientifically wrong. Never mind, it would "pass muster", so long as the party *developed*, so long as the scientific inaccuracy of its name was not hidden from it and did not hinder its development in the right direction!

Perhaps some wit would console us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a real party, it is developing splendidly; even such a meaningless and ugly term as "Bolshevik" will "pass muster", although it expresses nothing whatever but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we were in the majority.<sup>153</sup> Perhaps now that the persecution of our Party by republicans and "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois democrats in July and August has earned the name "Bolshevik" such universal respect, now that, in addition, this persecution marks the tremendous historical progress our Party has made in its *real* development—perhaps now even I might hesitate to insist on the suggestion I made in April to change the name of our Party. Perhaps I would propose a "compromise" to my comrades, namely, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word "Bolsheviks" in brackets.

But the question of the name of the Party is incomparably less important than the question of the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the usual arguments about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels warned and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy; that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible; indeed, someone may even suspect us of expecting the advent of a system or society in which the principle of subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed—for democracy means the recognition of this very principle.

No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognises the subordination of the minority to the majority, i.e., an organisation for the systematic use of *force* by one class against another, by one section of the population against another.

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organised and systematic violence, all use of violence against people in general. We do not expect the advent of a system of society in which the principle of subordination of the minority

to the majority will not be observed. In striving for socialism, however, we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, therefore, that the need for violence against people in general, for the *subordination* of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish altogether since people will *become accustomed* to observing the elementary conditions of social life *without violence* and *without subordination*.

In order to emphasise this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new *generation*, "reared in new, free social conditions", which will "be able to discard the entire lumber of the state"—of any state, including the democratic-republican state.

In order to explain this, it is necessary to analyse the economic basis of the withering away of the state.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

Marx explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, which was not published until 1891 when it was printed in *Neue Zeit*, Vol. IX, 1, and which has appeared in Russian in a special edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, which contains a criticism of Lassalleanism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

#### 1. PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875, with Engels's letter to Bebel of March 28, 1875, which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more of a "champion of the state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all chatter about the state be dropped altogether, that the word "state" be eliminated from the programme altogether and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. Yet Marx even spoke of the "future state in communist society", i.e., he would seem to recognise the need for the state even under communism.

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels's views on the state

and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers to the state in the process of *withering away*.

Clearly there can be no question of specifying the moment of the *future* "withering away", the more so since it will obviously be a lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the fact that they dealt with different subjects and pursued different aims. Engels set out to show Bebel graphically, sharply and in broad outline the utter absurdity of the current prejudices concerning the state (shared to no small degree by Lassalle). Marx only touched upon *this* question in passing, being interested in another subject, namely, the *development* of communist society.

The whole theory of Marx is the application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, considered and pithy form—to modern capitalism. Naturally, Marx was faced with the problem of applying this theory both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism.

On the basis of what *facts*, then, can the question of the future development of future communism be dealt with?

On the basis of the fact that it *has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *gave birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to make up a utopia, to indulge in idle guess-work about what cannot be known. Marx treated the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological variety, once he knew that it had originated in such and such a way and was changing in such and such a definite direction.

To begin with, Marx brushed aside the confusion the Gotha Programme brought into the question of the relationship between state and society. He wrote:

" 'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised countries, being more or less free from medieval admixture, more or less modified by the particular historical development of each country more or less developed. On the other hand, the 'present-day state' changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from what it is in Switzerland, and different in England from what it is in the United States. 'The present-day state' is, therefore, a fiction

"Nevertheless, the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have

this in common, that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only one more or less capitalistically developed. They have, therefore, also certain essential characteristics in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the 'present-day state', in contrast with the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died off.

"The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state."<sup>154</sup>

After thus ridiculing all talk about a "people's state", Marx formulated the question and gave warning, as it were, that those seeking a scientific answer to it should use only firmly-established scientific data.

The first fact that has been established most accurately by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact that was ignored by the utopians, and is ignored by the present-day opportunists, who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage, or a special phase, of *transition* from capitalism to communism.

## 2. THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM

Marx continued:

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*."

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

Previously the question was put as follows: to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, win political power and establish its revolutionary dictatorship.

Now the question is put somewhat differently: the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to communist society is impossible without a "political

transition period", and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

What, then, is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that the *Communist Manifesto* simply places side by side the two concepts: "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class" and "to win the battle of democracy". On the basis of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism.

In capitalist society, providing it develops under the most favourable conditions, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always hemmed in by the narrow limits set by capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in effect, a democracy for the minority, only for the propertied classes, only for the rich. Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics: freedom for the slave-owners. Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, the modern wage slaves are so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy", "cannot be bothered with politics"; in the ordinary, peaceful course of events, the majority of the population is debarred from participation in public and political life.

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly confirmed by Germany, because constitutional legality steadily endured there for a remarkably long time—nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and during this period the Social-Democrats were able to achieve far more than in other countries in the way of "utilising legality", and organised a larger proportion of the workers into a political party than anywhere else in the world.

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage slaves that has so far been recorded in capitalist society? One million members of the Social-Democratic Party—out of fifteen million wage-workers! Three million organised in trade unions—out of fifteen million!

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. If we look more closely into the machinery of capitalist democracy, we see everywhere, in the "petty"—supposedly petty—details of the suffrage (residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc.), in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the right of assembly (public buildings are not for "paupers"!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass

life (and nine out of ten, if not ninety-nine out of a hundred, bourgeois publicists and politicians come under this category); but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from active participation in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly when, in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class shall represent and repress them in parliament!<sup>155</sup>

But from this capitalist democracy—that is inevitably narrow and stealthily pushes aside the poor, and is therefore hypocritical and false through and through—forward development does not proceed simply, directly and smoothly, towards “greater and greater democracy”, as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, forward development, i.e., development towards communism, proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, and cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be *broken* by anyone else or in any other way.

And the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy, which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must suppress them in order to free humanity from wage slavery, their resistance must be crushed by force; it is clear that there is no freedom and no democracy where there is suppression and where there is violence.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that “the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist”.<sup>156</sup>

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force, i.e., exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism.

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only* then “the state . . . ceases to exist”, and “*it becomes possible to speak of freedom*”. Only then



will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to *wither away*, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, *without the special apparatus* for coercion called the state.

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process. Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect; for we see around us on millions of occasions how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social intercourse when there is no exploitation, when there is nothing that arouses indignation, evokes protest and revolt, and creates the need for *suppression*.

And so in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will for the first time create democracy for the people, for the majority, along with the necessary suppression of the exploiters, of the minority. Communism alone is capable of providing really complete democracy, and the more complete it is, the sooner it will become unnecessary and wither away of its own accord.

In other words, under capitalism we have the state in the proper sense of the word—that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and, what is more, of the majority by the minority. Naturally, to be successful, such an undertaking as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the utmost ferocity and savagery in the matter of suppressing, it calls for seas of blood, through which mankind is actually wading its way in slavery, serfdom and wage labour.

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism suppression is *still* necessary, but it is now the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state", is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitional state. It is no longer a state in the proper sense of the word; for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings

of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. And it is compatible with the extension of democracy to such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. Naturally, the exploiters are unable to suppress the people without a highly complex machine for performing this task, but *the people* can suppress the exploiters even with a very simple "machine", almost without a "machine", without a special apparatus, by the simple *organisation of the armed people* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we would remark, running ahead).

Lastly, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *nobody* to be suppressed—"nobody" in the sense of a *class*, of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not utopians, and do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to stop *such* excesses. In the first place, however, no special machine, no special apparatus of suppression, is needed for this; this will be done by the armed people themselves, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, interferes to put a stop to a scuffle or to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in the violation of the rules of social intercourse, is the exploitation of the people, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*". We do not know how quickly and in what succession, but we do know they will wither away. With their withering away the state will also *wither away*.

Without building utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined *now* regarding this future, namely, the difference between the lower and higher phases (levels, stages) of communist society.

### 3. THE FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "full product of his labour". Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, a fund for the replacement of the "wear and tear" of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption must be deducted a fund for administrative expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure, general phrase ("the full product of his labour to the worker"), Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there will be no capitalism, and says:

"What we have to deal with here [in analysing the programme of the workers' party] is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it *emerges* from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it comes."

It is this communist society, which has just emerged into the light of day out of the womb of capitalism and which is in every respect stamped with the birthmarks of the old society, that Marx terms the "first", or lower, phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary work, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done a certain amount of work. And with this certificate he receives from the public store of consumer goods a corresponding quantity of products. After a deduction is made of the amount of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given to it.

"Equality" apparently reigns supreme.

But when Lassalle, having in view such a social order (usually called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism), says that this is "equitable distribution", that this is "the equal right of all to an equal product of labour", Lassalle is mistaken and Marx exposes the mistake.

"Hence, the equal right," says Marx, in this case *still* certainly conforms to "bourgeois law", which, like all law, *implies inequality*. All law is an application of an *equal* measure to *different* people who in fact are not alike, are not equal to one another. That is why the "equal right" is a violation of equality and an injustice. In fact, everyone, having performed as much social labour as another, receives an equal share of the social product (after the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike: one is strong, another is weak; one is married, another is not; one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is:

“... With an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, the right instead of being equal would have to be unequal.”

The first phase of communism, therefore, cannot yet provide justice and equality: differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production*—the factories, machines, land, etc.—and make them private property. In smashing Lassalle’s petty-bourgeois, vague phrases about “equality” and “justice” *in general*, Marx shows the *course of development* of communist society, which is *compelled* to abolish at first *only* the “injustice” of the means of production seized by individuals, and which is *unable* at once to eliminate the other injustice, which consists in the distribution of consumer goods “according to the amount of labour performed” (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and “our” Tugan, constantly reproach the socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with “dreaming” of eliminating this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only most scrupulously takes account of the inevitable inequality of men, but he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society (commonly called “socialism”) *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of “bourgeois law” which *continues to prevail* so long as products are divided “according to the amount of labour performed”. Continuing, Marx says:

“But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged, after prolonged birth pangs, from capitalist society. Law can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.”

And so, in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) “bourgeois law” is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production. “Bourgeois law” recognises them as the private property of individuals. Socialism converts them into *common* property. *To that extent*—and to that extent alone—“bourgeois law” disappears.

However, it persists as far as its other part is concerned; it persists in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle, "He who does not work shall not eat", is *already* realised; the other socialist principle, "An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour", is also *already* realised. But this is not yet communism, and it does not yet abolish "bourgeois law", which gives unequal individuals, in return for unequal (really unequal) amounts of labour, equal amounts of products.

This is a "defect", says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism; for if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society *without any rules of law*. Besides, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately create* the economic prerequisites for *such* a change.

Now, there are no other rules than those of "bourgeois law". To this extent, therefore, there still remains the need for a state, which, while safeguarding the common ownership of the means of production, would safeguard equality in labour and in the distribution of products.

The state withers away insofar as there are no longer any capitalists, any classes, and, consequently, no *class* can be *suppressed*.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the safeguarding of "bourgeois law", which sanctifies actual inequality. For the state to wither away completely, complete communism is necessary.

#### 4. THE HIGHER PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Marx continues:

"In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished, after labour has become not only a livelihood but life's prime want, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"

Only now can we fully appreciate the correctness of Engels's remarks mercilessly ridiculing the absurdity of combining the

words "freedom" and "state". So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.

This expropriation will make it *possible* for the productive forces to develop to a tremendous extent. And when we see how incredibly capitalism is already *retarding* this development, when we see how much progress could be achieved on the basis of the level of technique already attained, we are entitled to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of doing away with the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming labour into "life's prime want"—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we are entitled to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state, emphasising the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of communism, and leaving the question of the time required for, or the concrete forms of, the withering away quite open, because there is *no* material for answering these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs", i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour has become so productive that they will voluntarily work *according to their ability*. "The narrow horizon of bourgeois law," which compels one to calculate with the heartlessness of a Shylock<sup>157</sup> whether one has not worked half an hour more than somebody else, whether one is not getting less pay than somebody else—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for society, in distributing the products, to regulate the quantity to be received by each; each will take freely "according to his needs".

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare that such a social order is "sheer utopia" and to sneer at the socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control over the labour of the individual citizen, any quan-

tity of truffles, cars, pianos, etc. Even to this day, most bourgeois "savants" confine themselves to sneering in this way, thereby betraying both their ignorance and their selfish defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of the development of communism will arrive; as for the great socialists' *forecast* that it will arrive, it presupposes not the present productivity of labour and *not the present* ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories,<sup>158</sup> are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth "just for fun", and of demanding the impossible.

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the *strictest* control by society *and by the state* over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be exercised not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of *armed workers*.

The selfish defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like the Tseretelis, Chernovs and Co.) consists in that they *substitute* arguing and talk about the distant future for the vital and burning question of *present-day* politics, namely, the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers and other employees of *one* huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the entire work of this syndicate to a genuinely democratic state, *the state of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*.

In fact, when a learned professor, followed by the philistine, followed in turn by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, talks of wild utopias, of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of "introducing" socialism, it is the higher stage, or phase, of communism he has in mind, which no one has ever promised or even thought to "introduce", because, generally speaking, it cannot be "introduced".

And this brings us to the question of the scientific distinction between socialism and communism which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social-Democrat". Politically, the distinction between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, probably, be tremendous. But it would be ridiculous to recognise this distinction now, under capitalism, and only individual anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there still are people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanov" conversion of the Kropotkins, of Grave, Cornelissen and other "stars" of anarchism into social-

chauvinists or "anarcho-trenchists", as Ghe, one of the few anarchists who have still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has put it).

But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the "first", or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production become *common* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations is that here, too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out of* capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented, "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes over words (What is socialism? What is communism?), Marx gives an analysis of what might be called the stages of the economic maturity of communism.

In its first phase, or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois law*". Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of *consumer* goods inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rules of law.

It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

But in fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of "bourgeois" law into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism.

Democracy is of enormous importance to the working class in its struggle against the capitalists for its emancipation. But democracy is by no means a boundary not to be overstepped; it is only one of the stages on the road from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism.

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society *in relation* to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour



and wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing farther, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". By what stages, by means of what practical measures humanity will proceed to this supreme aim we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realise how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, rigid, fixed once and for all, whereas in reality *only* socialism will be the beginning of a rapid, genuine, truly mass forward movement, embracing first the *majority* and then the whole of the population, in all spheres of public and private life.

Democracy is a form of the state, one of its varieties. Consequently, like every state, it represents, on the one hand, the organised, systematic use of force against persons; but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of equality of citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure of, and to administer, the state. This, in turn, results in the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat, and enables it to crush, smash to atoms, wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican-bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy and to substitute for them a *more* democratic state machine, but a state machine nevertheless, in the shape of armed workers who proceed to form a militia involving the entire population.

Here "quantity turns into quality": *such* a degree of democracy implies overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society and beginning its socialist reorganisation. If really *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. The development of capitalism, in turn, creates the *preconditions* that *enable* really "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these preconditions are: universal literacy, which has already been achieved in a number of the most advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex, socialised apparatus of the postal service, railways, big factories, large-scale commerce, banking, etc., etc.

Given these *economic* preconditions, it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalists and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the *control* over production and distribution, in the work of *keeping account* of labour and products, by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically

trained staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists, and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—that is *mainly* what is needed for the “smooth working”, for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* country-wide state “syndicate”. All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay. The accounting and control necessary for this have been *simplified* by capitalism to the utmost and reduced to the extraordinarily simple operations—which any literate person can perform—of supervising and recording, knowledge of the four rules of arithmetic, and issuing appropriate receipts.\*

When the *majority* of the people begin independently and everywhere to keep such accounts and exercise such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general and popular; and there will be no getting away from it, there will be “nowhere to go”.

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay.

But this “factory” discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary *step* for thoroughly cleansing society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further* progress.

From the moment all members of society, or at least the vast majority, have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this work into their own hands, have organised control over the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits and over the workers who have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether. The more complete the democracy, the nearer the moment when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the “state” which consists of the armed workers, and which is “no

\* When the more important functions of the state are reduced to such accounting and control by the workers themselves, it will cease to be a “political state” and “public functions will lose their political character and become mere administrative functions” (cf. above, Chapter IV, 2, Engels’s controversy with the anarchists).

longer a state in the proper sense of the word", the more rapidly *every form of state begins to wither away*.

For when *all* have learned to administer and actually do independently administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other "guardians of capitalist traditions", the escape from this popular accounting and control will inevitably become so incredibly difficult, such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of the community will very soon become a *habit*.

Then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

## CHAPTER VI THE VULGARISATION OF MARXISM BY THE OPPORTUNISTS

The question of the relation of the state to the social revolution, and of the social revolution to the state, like the question of revolution generally, was given very little attention by the leading theoreticians and publicists of the Second International (1889-1914). But the most characteristic thing about the process of the gradual growth of opportunism that led to the collapse of the Second International in 1914 is the fact that even when these people were squarely faced with this question they *tried to evade* it or ignored it.

In general, it may be said that *evasiveness* over the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state—an evasiveness which benefited and fostered opportunism—resulted in the *distortion* of Marxism and in its complete vulgarisation.

To characterise this lamentable process, if only briefly, we shall take the most prominent theoreticians of Marxism: Plekhanov and Kautsky.

### 1. PLEKHANOV'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE ANARCHISTS

Plekhanov wrote a special pamphlet on the relation of anarchism to socialism, entitled *Anarchism and Socialism*, which was published in German in 1894.

In treating this subject, Plekhanov contrived completely to evade the most urgent, burning, and most politically essential

issue in the struggle against anarchism, namely, the relation of the revolution to the state, and the question of the state in general! His pamphlet falls into two distinct parts: one of them is historical and literary, and contains valuable material on the history of the ideas of Stirner, Proudhon and others; the other is philistine, and contains a clumsy dissertation on the theme that an anarchist cannot be distinguished from a bandit.

It is a most amusing combination of subjects and most characteristic of Plekhanov's whole activity on the eve of the revolution and during the revolutionary period in Russia. In fact, in the years 1905 to 1917, Plekhanov revealed himself as a semi-doctrinaire and semi-philistine who, in politics, trailed in the wake of the bourgeoisie.

We have seen how, in their controversy with the anarchists, Marx and Engels with the utmost thoroughness explained their views on the relation of revolution to the state. In 1891, in his foreword to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Engels wrote that "we"—that is, Engels and Marx—"were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the [First] International, engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists".<sup>159</sup>

The anarchists had tried to claim the Paris Commune as their "own", so to say, as a corroboration of their doctrine; and they completely misunderstood its lessons and Marx's analysis of these lessons. Anarchism has given nothing even approximating true answers to the concrete political questions: Must the old state machine be *smashed*? And *what* should be put in its place?

But to speak of "anarchism and socialism" while completely evading the question of the state, and *disregarding* the whole development of Marxism before and after the Commune, meant inevitably slipping into opportunism. For what opportunism needs most of all is that the two questions just mentioned should *not* be raised at all. That *in itself* is a victory for opportunism.

## 2. KAUTSKY'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE OPPORTUNISTS

Undoubtedly, an immeasurably larger number of Kautsky's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. It is not without reason that some German Social-Democrats say in jest that Kautsky is read more in Russia than in Germany (let us say, in parenthesis, that this jest has a far deeper historical meaning than those who first made it suspect. The Russian workers, by making in 1905 an unusually great and unprecedented demand for the best works of the best Social-Democratic literature in the world, and by receiving translations and editions of these works in quantities unheard of in other

countries, rapidly transplanted, so to speak, the enormous experience of a neighbouring, more advanced country to the young soil of our proletarian movement).

Besides his popularisation of Marxism, Kautsky is particularly known in our country for his controversy with the opportunists, with Bernstein at their head. One fact, however, is almost unknown, one which cannot be ignored if we set out to investigate how Kautsky drifted into the morass of unbelievably disgraceful confusion and defence of social-chauvinism during the supreme crisis of 1914-15. This fact is as follows: shortly before he came out against the most prominent representatives of opportunism in France (Millerand and Jaurès) and in Germany (Bernstein), Kautsky betrayed very considerable vacillation. The Marxist *Zarya*,<sup>160</sup> which was published in Stuttgart in 1901-02, and advocated revolutionary proletarian views, was forced to *enter into controversy* with Kautsky and describe as "elastic" the half-hearted, evasive resolution, conciliatory towards the opportunists, that he proposed at the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900.<sup>161</sup> Kautsky's letters published in Germany reveal no less hesitancy on his part before he took the field against Bernstein.

Of immeasurably greater significance, however, is the fact that, in his very controversy with the opportunists, in his formulation of the question and his manner of treating it, we can now see, as we study the *history* of Kautsky's latest betrayal of Marxism, his systematic deviation towards opportunism precisely on the question of the state.

Let us take Kautsky's first important work against opportunism, *Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme*. Kautsky refutes Bernstein in detail, but here is a characteristic thing:

Bernstein, in his *Prerisises of Socialism*, of Herostratean fame, accuses Marxism of "*Blanquism*" (an accusation since repeated thousands of times by the opportunists and liberal bourgeoisie in Russia against the revolutionary Marxists, the Bolsheviks). In this connection Bernstein dwells particularly on Marx's *The Civil War in France*, and tries, quite unsuccessfully, as we have seen, to identify Marx's views on the lessons of the Commune with those of Proudhon. Bernstein pays particular attention to the conclusion which Marx emphasised in his 1872 preface to the *Communist Manifesto*, namely, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes".<sup>162</sup>

This statement "pleased" Bernstein so much that he used it no less than three times in his book, interpreting it in the most distorted, opportunist way.

As we have seen, Marx meant that the working class must *smash, break, shatter* (*Sprengung*, explosion—the expression used

by Engels) the whole state machine. But according to Bernstein it would appear as though Marx in these words warned the working class *against* excessive revolutionary zeal when seizing power.

A cruder and more hideous distortion of Marx's idea cannot be imagined.

How, then, did Kautsky proceed in his most detailed refutation of Bernsteinism?

He refrained from analysing the utter distortion of Marxism by opportunism on this point. He cited the above-quoted passage from Engels's preface to Marx's *Civil War* and said that according to Marx the working class cannot *simply* take over the *ready-made* state machinery, but that, generally speaking, it *can* take it over—and that was all. Kautsky did not say a word about the fact that Bernstein attributed to Marx the *very opposite* of Marx's real idea, that since 1852 Marx had formulated the task of the proletarian revolution as being to "smash" the state machine.<sup>163</sup>

The result was that the most essential distinction between Marxism and opportunism on the subject of the tasks of the proletarian revolution was slurred over by Kautsky!

"We can quite safely leave the solution of the problem of the proletarian dictatorship to the future," said Kautsky, writing "*against*" Bernstein. (P. 172, German edition.)

This is not a polemic *against* Bernstein, but, in essence, a *concession* to him, a surrender to opportunism; for at present the opportunists ask nothing better than to "quite safely leave to the future" all fundamental questions of the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

From 1852 to 1891, or for forty years, Marx and Engels taught the proletariat that it must smash the state machine. Yet, in 1899, Kautsky, confronted with the complete betrayal of Marxism by the opportunists on this point, fraudulently *substituted* for the question whether it is necessary to smash this machine the question of the concrete forms in which it is to be smashed, and then sought refuge behind the "indisputable" (and barren) philistine truth that concrete forms cannot be known in advance!!

A gulf separates Marx and Kautsky over their attitudes towards the proletarian party's task of training the working class for revolution.

Let us take the next, more mature, work by Kautsky, which was also largely devoted to a refutation of opportunist errors. It is his pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*. In this pamphlet, the author chose as his special theme the question of "the proletarian revolution" and "the proletarian regime". He gave much that was exceedingly valuable, but he *avoided* the question of the

state. Throughout the pamphlet the author speaks of the winning of state power—and no more; that is, he has chosen a formula which makes a concession to the opportunists, inasmuch as it *admits* the possibility of seizing power *without* destroying the state machine. The very thing which Marx in 1872 declared to be “obsolete” in the programme of the *Communist Manifesto*,<sup>164</sup> is *revived* by Kautsky in 1902.

A special section in the pamphlet is devoted to the “forms and weapons of the social revolution”. Here Kautsky speaks of the mass political strike, of civil war, and of the “instruments of the might of the modern large state, its bureaucracy and the army”; but he does not say a word about what the Commune has already taught the workers. Evidently, it was not without reason that Engels issued a warning, particularly to the German socialists, against “superstitious reverence” for the state.

Kautsky treats the matter as follows: the victorious proletariat “will carry out the democratic programme”, and he goes on to formulate its clauses. But he does not say a word about the new material provided by 1871 on the subject of the replacement of bourgeois democracy by proletarian democracy. Kautsky disposes of the question by using such “impressive-sounding” banalities as:

“Still, it goes without saying that we shall not achieve supremacy under the present conditions. Revolution itself presupposes long and deep-going struggles, which, in themselves, will change our present political and social structure.”

Undoubtedly, this “goes without saying”, just as the fact that horses eat oats or the Volga flows into the Caspian. Only it is a pity that an empty and bombastic phrase about “deep-going” struggles is used to *avoid* a question of vital importance to the revolutionary proletariat, namely, *what* makes *its* revolution “deep-going” in relation to the state, to democracy, as distinct from previous, non-proletarian revolutions.

By avoiding this question, Kautsky *in practice* makes a concession to opportunism on this most essential point, although *in words* he declares stern war against it and stresses the importance of the “idea of revolution” (how much is this “idea” worth when one is afraid to teach the workers the concrete lessons of revolution?), or says, “revolutionary idealism before everything else”, or announces that the English workers are now “hardly more than petty bourgeois”.

“The most varied forms of enterprises—bureaucratic [??], trade unionist, co-operative, private ... can exist side by side in socialist society,” Kautsky writes. “... There are, for example, enterprises which cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organisation, such as the railways. Here the democratic organisation may take the following shape: the workers elect delegates who

form a sort of parliament, which establishes the working regulations and supervises the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. The management of other enterprises may be transferred to the trade unions, and still others may become co-operative enterprises."

This argument is erroneous; it is a step backward compared with the explanations Marx and Engels gave in the seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example.

As far as the supposedly necessary "bureaucratic" organisation is concerned, there is no difference whatever between a railway and any other enterprise in large-scale machine industry, any factory, large shop, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all these enterprises makes absolutely imperative the strictest discipline, the utmost precision on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise may come to a stop, or machinery or the finished product may be damaged. In all these enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form a *sort of parliament*".

The whole point, however, is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* be a parliament in the sense of a bourgeois parliamentary institution. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* merely "establish the working regulations and supervise the management of the bureaucratic apparatus", as Kautsky, whose thinking does not go beyond the bounds of bourgeois parliamentarism, imagines. In socialist society, the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, "establish the working regulations and supervise the management" of the "apparatus", *but* this apparatus will *not* be "bureaucratic". The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and other employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucrats the measures will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) pay not to exceed that of a workman; (3) immediate introduction of control and supervision by *all*, so that *all* may become "bureaucrats" for a time and that, therefore, *nobody* may be able to become a "bureaucrat".

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words: "The Commune was a working, not a parliamentary, body, executive and legislative at the same time."<sup>165</sup>

Kautsky has not understood at all the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (*not for the people*) with bureaucracy (*against the people*), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry these measures



through to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people.

Kautsky here displays the same old "superstitious reverence" for the state, and "superstitious belief" in bureaucracy.

Let us now pass to the last and best of Kautsky's works against the opportunists, his pamphlet *The Road to Power* (which, I believe, has not been published in Russian, for it appeared in 1909,<sup>166</sup> when reaction was at its height in our country). This pamphlet is a big step forward, since it does not deal with the revolutionary programme in general, as the pamphlet of 1899 against Bernstein, or with the tasks of the social revolution irrespective of the time of its occurrence, as the 1902 pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*; it deals with the concrete conditions which compel us to recognise that the "era of revolutions" is *setting in*.

The author explicitly points to the aggravation of class antagonisms in general and to imperialism, which plays a particularly important part in this respect. After the "revolutionary period of 1789-1871" in Western Europe, he says, a similar period began in the East in 1905. A world war is approaching with menacing rapidity. "It [the proletariat] can no longer talk of premature revolution." "We have entered a revolutionary period." The "revolutionary era is beginning"

These statements are perfectly clear. This pamphlet of Kautsky's should serve as a measure of comparison of what the German Social-Democrats *promised to be* before the imperialist war and the depth of degradation to which they, including Kautsky himself, sank when the war broke out. "The present situation," Kautsky wrote in the pamphlet under survey, "is fraught with the danger that we [i.e., the German Social-Democrats] may easily appear to be more 'moderate' than we really are." It turned out that in reality the German Social-Democratic Party was much more moderate and opportunist than it appeared to be!

It is all the more characteristic, therefore, that although Kautsky so explicitly declared that the era of revolutions had already begun, in the pamphlet which he himself said was devoted to an analysis of the "*political* revolution", he again completely avoided the question of the state.

These evasions of the question, these omissions and equivocations, inevitably added up to that complete swing-over to opportunism with which we shall now have to deal.

Kautsky, the German Social-Democrats' spokesman, seems to have declared: I abide by revolutionary views (1899), I recognise, above all, the inevitability of the social revolution of the proletariat (1902), I recognise the advent of a new era of revolutions (1909). Still, I am going back on what Marx said as early as

1852, since the question of the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state is being raised (1912).

It was in this point-blank form that the question was put in Kautsky's controversy with Pannekoek.

### 3. KAUTSKY'S CONTROVERSY WITH PANNEKOEK

In opposing Kautsky, Pannekoek came out as one of the representatives of the "Left radical" trend which included Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek and others. Advocating revolutionary tactics, they were united in the conviction that Kautsky was going over to the "Centre", which wavered in an unprincipled manner between Marxism and opportunism. This view was proved perfectly correct by the war, when this "Centrist" (wrongly called Marxist) trend, or Kautskyism, revealed itself in all its repulsive wretchedness.

In an article touching on the question of the state, entitled "Mass Action and Revolution" (*Neue Zeit*, 1912, Vol. XXX, 2), Pannekoek described Kautsky's attitude as one of "passive radicalism", as "a theory of inactive expectancy". "Kautsky refuses to see the process of revolution," wrote Pannekoek (p. 616). In presenting the matter in this way, Pannekoek approached the subject which interests us, namely, the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state.

"The struggle of the proletariat," he wrote, "is not merely a struggle against the bourgeoisie *for* state power, but a struggle *against* state power. . . . The content of this [the proletarian] revolution is the destruction and dissolution [Auflösung] of the instruments of power of the state with the aid of the instruments of power of the proletariat (p. 544). The struggle will cease only when, as the result of it, the state organisation is completely destroyed. The organisation of the majority will then have demonstrated its superiority by destroying the organisation of the ruling minority." (P. 548.)

The formulation in which Pannekoek presented his ideas suffers from serious defects. But its meaning is clear nonetheless, and it is interesting to note *how* Kautsky combated it.

"Up to now," he wrote, "the antithesis between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists has been that the former wished to win state power while the latter wished to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both." (P. 724.)

Although Pannekoek's exposition lacks precision and concreteness—not to speak of other shortcomings of his article which have no bearing on the present subject—Kautsky seized precisely on the point of *principle* raised by Pannekoek; and *on this fundamental point of principle* Kautsky completely abandoned the Marxist position and went over wholly to opportunism. His definition of the distinction between the Social-Democrats and

the anarchists is absolutely wrong; he completely vulgarises and distorts Marxism.

The distinction between the Marxists and the anarchists is this: (1) The former, while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognise that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of socialism, which leads to the withering away of the state. The latter want to abolish the state completely overnight, not understanding the conditions under which the state can be abolished. (2) The former recognise that after the proletariat has won political power it must completely destroy the old state machine and replace it by a new one consisting of an organisation of the armed workers, after the type of the Commune. The latter, while insisting on the destruction of the state machine, have a very vague idea of *what* the proletariat will put in its place and *how* it will use its revolutionary power. The anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should use the state power, they reject its revolutionary dictatorship. (3) The former demand that the proletariat be trained for revolution by utilising the present state. The anarchists reject this.

In this controversy, it is not Kautsky but Pannekoek who represents Marxism, for it was Marx who taught that the proletariat cannot simply win state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but must smash this apparatus, must break it and replace it by a new one.

Kautsky abandons Marxism for the opportunist camp, for this destruction of the state machine, which is utterly unacceptable to the opportunists, completely disappears from his argument, and he leaves a loophole for them in that "conquest" may be interpreted as the simple acquisition of a majority.

To cover up his distortion of Marxism, Kautsky behaves like a doctrinaire: he puts forward a "quotation" from Marx himself. In 1850 Marx wrote that a "resolute" centralisation of power in the hands of the state authority<sup>167</sup> was necessary, and Kautsky triumphantly asks: does Pannekoek want to destroy "Centralism"?

This is simply a trick, like Bernstein's identification of the views of Marxism and Proudhonism on the subject of federalism as against centralism.

Kautsky's "quotation" is neither here nor there. Centralism is possible with both the old and the new state machine. If the workers voluntarily unite their armed forces, this will be centralism, but it will be based on the "complete destruction" of the centralised state apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. Kautsky acts like an outright swindler by evading the perfectly well-known arguments of Marx and Engels

on the Commune and plucking out a quotation which has nothing to do with the point at issue.

"Perhaps he [Pannekoek]," Kautsky continues, "wants to abolish the state functions of the officials? But we cannot do without officials even in the party and the trade unions, let alone in the state administration. And our programme does not demand the abolition of state officials, but that they be elected by the people. . . . We are discussing here not the form the administrative apparatus of the 'future state' will assume, but whether our political struggle abolishes literally dissolves—*auflost* the state power *before we have captured it* [Kautsky's italics]. Which ministry with its officials could be abolished?" Then follows an enumeration of the ministries of education, justice, finance and war. "No, not one of the present ministries will be removed by our political struggle against the government. . . . I repeat, in order to prevent misunderstanding: we are not discussing here the form the 'future state' will be given by the victorious Social-Democrats, but how the present state is changed by our opposition." (P. 725)

This is an obvious trick. Pannekoek raised the question of *revolution*. Both the title of his article and the passages quoted above clearly indicate this. By skipping to the question of "opposition", Kautsky substitutes the opportunist for the revolutionary point of view. What he says means: at present we are an opposition; what we shall be *after* we have captured power, that we shall see. *Revolution has vanished!* And that is exactly what the opportunists wanted.

The point at issue is neither opposition nor political struggle in general, but *revolution*. Revolution consists in the proletariat *destroying* the "administrative apparatus" and the *whole* state machine, replacing it by a new one, made up of the armed workers. Kautsky displays a "superstitious reverence" for "ministries"; but why can they not be replaced, say, by committees of specialists working under sovereign, all-powerful Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The point is not at all whether the "ministries" will remain, or whether "committees of specialists" or some other bodies will be set up; that is quite immaterial. The point is whether the old state machine (bound by thousands of threads to the bourgeoisie and permeated through and through with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be *destroyed* and replaced by a *new* one. Revolution consists not in the new class commanding, governing with the aid of the *old* state machine, but in this class *smashing* this machine and commanding, governing with the aid of a *new* machine. Kautsky slurs over this *basic* idea of Marxism, or he does not understand it at all.

His question about officials clearly shows that he does not understand the lessons of the Commune or the teachings of Marx. "We cannot do without officials even in the party and the trade unions. . . ."

We cannot do without officials *under capitalism*, under the rule of the bourgeoisie. The proletariat is oppressed, the working people are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism, democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organisations and trade unions are corrupted—or rather tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e., privileged persons divorced from the people and standing *above* the people.

That is the *essence* of bureaucracy; and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, *even* proletarian functionaries will inevitably be “bureaucratised” to a certain extent.

According to Kautsky, since elected functionaries will remain under socialism, so will officials, so will the bureaucracy! This is exactly where he is wrong. Marx, referring to the example of the Commune, showed that under socialism functionaries will cease to be “bureaucrats”, to be “officials”, they will cease to be so *in proportion as*—in addition to the principle of election of officials—the principle of recall at any time is *also* introduced, as salaries are reduced to the level of the wages of the average workman, *and* as parliamentary institutions are replaced by “working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time”.<sup>168</sup>

As a matter of fact, the whole of Kautsky’s argument against Pannekoek, and particularly the former’s wonderful point that we cannot do without officials even in our party and trade union organisations, is merely a repetition of Bernstein’s old “arguments” against Marxism in general. In his renegade book, *The Premises of Socialism*, Bernstein combats the ideas of “primitive” democracy, combats what he calls “doctrinaire democracy”: binding mandates, unpaid officials, impotent central representative bodies, etc. To prove that this “primitive” democracy is unsound, Bernstein refers to the experience of the British trade unions, as interpreted by the Webbs.<sup>169</sup> Seventy years of development “in absolute freedom”, he says (p.137, German edition), convinced the trade unions that primitive democracy was useless, and they replaced it by ordinary democracy, i.e., parliamentarism combined with bureaucracy.

In reality, the trade unions did not develop “in absolute freedom” *but in absolute capitalist slavery*, under which, it goes without saying, a number of concessions to the prevailing evil, violence, falsehood, exclusion of the poor from the affairs of “higher” administration, “cannot be done without”. Under socialism much of “primitive” democracy will inevitably be

revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the *mass* of the population will rise to taking an *independent* part, not only in voting and elections, *but also in the everyday administration of the state*. Under socialism *all* will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.

Marx's critico-analytical genius saw in the practical measures of the Commune the *turning-point* which the opportunists fear and do not want to recognise because of their cowardice, because they do not want to break irrevocably with the bourgeoisie, and which the anarchists do not want to see, either because they are in a hurry or because they do not understand at all the conditions of great social changes. "We must not even think of destroying the old state machine; how can we do without ministries and officials?" argues the opportunist, who is completely saturated with philistinism and who, at bottom, not only does not believe in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but lives in mortal dread of it (like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries).

"We must think *only* of destroying the old state machine; it is no use probing into the *concrete* lessons of earlier proletarian revolutions and analysing *what* to put in the place of what has been destroyed, and *how*," argues the anarchist (the best of the anarchists, of course, and not those who, following the Kropotkins and Co., trail behind the bourgeoisie). Consequently, the tactics of the anarchist become the tactics of *despair* instead of a ruthlessly bold revolutionary effort to solve concrete problems while taking into account the practical conditions of the mass movement.

Marx teaches us to avoid both errors; he teaches us to act with supreme boldness in destroying the entire old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely: the Commune was able in the space of a few weeks to *start* building a *new*, proletarian state machine by introducing such-and-such measures to provide wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy. Let us learn revolutionary boldness from the Communards; let us see in their practical measures the *outline* of really urgent and immediately possible measures, and then, *following this road*, we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy.

The possibility of this destruction is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the *people* to a new life, will create such conditions for the *majority* of the population as will enable *everybody*, without exception, to perform "state functions", and this will lead to the *complete withering away* of every form of state in general.

"Its object [the object of the mass strike]," Kautsky continues, "cannot be to *destroy* the state power; its only object can be to make the government compliant on some specific question, or to replace a government hostile to the proletariat by one willing to meet it half-way [entgegenkommende]. . . . But never, under no circumstances can it [that is, the proletarian victory over a hostile government] lead to the *destruction* of the state power; it can lead only to a certain *shifting* [Verschiebung] of the balance of forces *within the state power*. . . . The aim of our political struggle remains, as in the past, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by raising parliament to the rank of master of the government." (Pp. 726, 727, 732.)

This is nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism: repudiating revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words. Kautsky's thoughts go no further than a "government . . . willing to meet the proletariat half-way"—a step backward to philistinism compared with 1847, when the *Communist Manifesto* proclaimed "the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class".<sup>170</sup>

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved "unity" with the Scheidemanns, Plekhanovs and Vanderveldes, all of whom agree to fight for a government "willing to meet the proletariat half-way".

We, however, shall break with these traitors to socialism, and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine, in order that the armed proletariat itself *may become the government*. These are two vastly different things.

Kautsky will have to enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens and Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretelis and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the balance of forces within the state power", for "winning a majority in parliament", and "raising parliament to the rank of master of the government". A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic.

We, however, shall break with the opportunists; and the entire class-conscious proletariat will be with us in the fight—not to "shift the balance of forces", but to *overthrow the bourgeoisie, to destroy bourgeois parliamentarism*, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

\* \* \*

To the right of Kautsky in international socialism there are trends such as *Socialist Monthly*<sup>171</sup> in Germany (Legien, David, Kolb and many others, including the Scandinavians Stauning and Branting); Jaurès's followers<sup>172</sup> and Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Turati, Treves and other Right-wingers of the Italian Party; the Fabians and "Independents" (the Indepen-

dent Labour Party,<sup>173</sup> which, in fact, has always been dependent on the Liberals) in Britain; and the like. All these gentry, who play a tremendous, very often a predominant role in the parliamentary work and the press of their parties, repudiate outright the dictatorship of the proletariat and pursue a policy of undisguised opportunism. In the eyes of these gentry, the "dictatorship" of the proletariat "contradicts" democracy!! There is really no essential distinction between them and the petty-bourgeois democrats.

Taking this circumstance into consideration, we are justified in drawing the conclusion that the Second International, that is, the overwhelming majority of its official representatives, has completely sunk into opportunism. The experience of the Commune has been not only ignored, but distorted. Far from inculcating in the workers' minds the idea that the time is nearing when they must act to smash the old state machine, replace it by a new one, and in this way make their political rule the foundation for the socialist reorganisation of society, they have actually preached to the masses the very opposite and have depicted the "conquest of power" in a way that has left thousands of loopholes for opportunism.

The distortion and hushing up of the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state could not but play an immense role at a time when states, which possess a military apparatus expanded as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, have become military monsters which are exterminating millions of people in order to settle the issue as to whether Britain or Germany—this or that finance capital—is to rule the world.

The MS continues as follows

## Chapter VII

### THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONS OF 1905 AND 1917

The subject indicated in the title of this chapter is so vast that volumes could and should be written about it. In the present pamphlet we shall have to confine ourselves, naturally, to the most important lessons provided by experience, those bearing directly upon the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution with regard to state power (Here the manuscript breaks off—*Ed*)



## POSTSCRIPT TO THE FIRST EDITION

This pamphlet was written in August and September 1917. I had already drawn up the plan for the next, the seventh, chapter, "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917". Apart from the title, however, I had no time to write a single line of the chapter; I was "interrupted" by a political crisis—the eve of the October revolution of 1917. Such an "interruption" can only be welcomed; but the writing of the second part of the pamphlet ("The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917") will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of the revolution" than to write about it

*The Author*

Petrograd  
November 30, 1917

Written in August-September 1917,  
Postscript to the first edition  
on November 30, 1917  
and section 3 of Chap. II  
earlier than December 17, 1918

Published as a pamphlet in 1918  
by Zhizn i Znaniye Publishers, Petrograd

*Collected Works*, Vol. 25,  
pp. 331-432

---

## THE BOLSHEVIKS MUST ASSUME POWER

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND THE PETROGRAD  
AND MOSCOW COMMITTEES OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

The Bolsheviks, having obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, can and *must* take state power into their own hands.

They can because the active majority of revolutionary elements in the two chief cities is large enough to carry the people with it, to overcome the opponent's resistance, to smash him, and to gain and retain power. For the Bolsheviks, by immediately proposing a democratic peace, by immediately giving the land to the peasants and by re-establishing the democratic institutions and liberties which have been mangled and shattered by Kerensky, will form a government which *nobody* will be able to overthrow.

The majority of the people are *on our side*. This was proved by the long and painful course of events from May 6 to August 31 and to September 12.<sup>174</sup> The majority gained in the Soviets of the metropolitan cities *resulted* from the people coming over *to our side*. The wavering of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks and the increase in the number of internationalists within their ranks prove the same thing.

The Democratic Conference represents *not* a majority of the revolutionary people, but *only the compromising upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie*. We must not be deceived by the election figures; elections prove nothing. Compare the elections to the city councils of Petrograd and Moscow with the elections to the Soviets. Compare the elections in Moscow with the Moscow strike of August 12.<sup>175</sup> Those are objective facts regarding that majority of revolutionary elements that are leading the people.

The Democratic Conference is deceiving the peasants; it is giving them neither peace nor land.

A Bolshevik government *alone* will satisfy the demands of the peasants.

\* \* \*

Why must the Bolsheviks assume power *at this very moment*?

Because the impending surrender of Petrograd will make our chances a hundred times less favourable.

And it is *not in our power* to prevent the surrender of Petrograd while the army is headed by Kerensky and Co.

Nor can we "wait" for the Constituent Assembly, for by surrendering Petrograd Kerensky and Co. *can* always *frustrate* its convocation. Our Party alone, on taking power, can secure the Constituent Assembly's convocation: it will then accuse the other parties of procrastination and will be able to substantiate its accusations.

A separate peace between the British and German imperialists must and can be prevented, but only by quick action.

The people are tired of the waverings of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. It is only our victory in the metropolitan cities that will carry the peasants with us.

\* \* \*

We are concerned now not with the "day", or "moment" of insurrection in the narrow sense of the word. That will be only decided by the common voice of those who are *in contact* with the workers and soldiers, with *the masses*.

The point is that now, at the Democratic Conference, our Party has virtually *its own congress*, and this congress (whether it wishes to or not) *must* decide the *fate of the revolution*.

The point is to make the *task* clear to the Party. The present task must be an *armed uprising* in Petrograd and Moscow (with its region), the seizing of power and the overthrow of the government. We must consider *how* to agitate for this without expressly saying as much in the press.

We must remember and weigh Marx's words about insurrection, "*Insurrection is an art*",<sup>176</sup> etc.

\* \* \*

It would be naïve to wait for a "formal" majority for the Bolsheviks. No revolution ever waits for *that*. Kerensky and Co. are not waiting either, and are preparing to surrender Petrograd. It is the wretched waverings of the Democratic Conference that are bound to exhaust the patience of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow! History will not forgive us if we do not assume power now.

There is no apparatus? There is an apparatus—the Soviets and the democratic organisations. The international situation

*right* now, on *the eve* of the conclusion of a separate peace between the British and the Germans, is *in our favour*. To propose peace to the nations right now means *to win*.

By taking power both in Moscow and in Petrograd *at once* (it doesn't matter which comes first, Moscow may possibly begin), we shall win *absolutely and unquestionably*.

*N. Lenin*

Written September 12-14 (25-27), 1917

First published in 1921  
in the magazine *Proletarskaya Revoliutsia* No 2

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 19-21

---

# MARXISM AND INSURRECTION

A LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

One of the most vicious and probably most widespread distortions of Marxism resorted to by the dominant "socialist" parties is the opportunist lie that preparation for insurrection, and generally the treatment of insurrection as an art, is "Blanquism".

Bernstein, the leader of opportunism, has already earned himself unfortunate fame by accusing Marxism of Blanquism, and when our present-day opportunists cry Blanquism they do not improve on or "enrich" the meagre "ideas" of Bernstein one little bit.

Marxists are accused of Blanquism for treating insurrection as an art! Can there be a more flagrant perversion of the truth, when not a single Marxist will deny that it was Marx who expressed himself on this score in the most definite, precise and categorical manner, referring to insurrection specifically as an *art*, saying that it must be treated as an art, that you must *win* the first success and then proceed from success to success, never ceasing the *offensive* against the enemy, taking advantage of his confusion, etc., etc.?

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism*.

Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an *art* is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution.

To show that it is precisely the present moment that the Party *must* recognise as the one in which the entire course of events has objectively placed *insurrection* on the order of the day and that insurrection must be treated as an art, it will perhaps be best to use the method of comparison, and to draw a parallel between July 3-4 and the September days.

On July 3-4 it could have been argued, without violating the truth, that the correct thing to do was to take power, for our enemies would in any case have accused us of insurrection and ruthlessly treated us as rebels. However, to have decided on this account in favour of taking power at that time would have been wrong, because the objective conditions for the victory of the insurrection did not exist.

(1) We still lacked the support of the class which is the vanguard of the revolution.

We still did not have a majority among the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and Moscow. Now we have a majority in both Soviets. It was created *solely* by the history of July and August, by the experience of the "ruthless treatment" meted out to the Bolsheviks, and by the experience of the Kornilov revolt.

(2) There was no country-wide revolutionary upsurge at that time. There is now, after the Kornilov revolt; the situation in the provinces and assumption of power by the Soviets in many localities prove this.

(3) At that time there was no *vacillation* on any serious political scale among our enemies and among the irresolute petty bourgeoisie. Now the vacillation is enormous. Our main enemy, Allied and world imperialism (for world imperialism is headed by the "Allies"), *has begun to waver* between a war to a victorious finish and a separate peace directed against Russia. Our petty-bourgeois democrats, having clearly lost their majority among the people, have begun to vacillate enormously, and have rejected a bloc, i.e., a coalition, with the Cadets

(4) Therefore, an insurrection on July 3-4 would have been a mistake; we could not have retained power either physically or politically. We could not have retained it physically even though Petrograd was at times in our hands, because at that time our workers and soldiers would not have *fought and died* for Petrograd. There was not at the time that "savagery", or fierce hatred *both of the Kerenskys and of the Tseretelis and Chernovs*. Our people had still not been tempered by the experience of the persecution of the Bolsheviks in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks participated.

We could not have retained power politically on July 3-4 because, *before the Kornilov revolt*, the army and the provinces could and would have marched against Petrograd.

Now the picture is entirely different.

We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.

We have the following of the *majority* of the people, because Chernov's resignation, while by no means the only symptom, is the most striking and obvious symptom that the peasants *will not receive land* from the Socialist-Revolutionaries' bloc (or from the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves). And that is the chief reason for the popular character of the revolution.

We are in the advantageous position of a party that knows for certain which way to go at a time when *imperialism as a whole* and the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary bloc as a whole are vacillating in an incredible fashion.

*Our victory is assured*, for the people are close to desperation, and we are showing the entire people a sure way out; we demonstrated to the entire people during the "Kornilov days" the value of our leadership, and then *proposed* to the politicians of the bloc a compromise, *which they rejected*, although there is no let-up in their vacillations.

It would be a great mistake to think that our offer of a compromise had not *yet* been rejected, and that the Democratic Conference may *still* accept it. The compromise was proposed *by a party to parties*; it could not have been proposed in any other way. It was rejected by *parties*. The Democratic Conference is a *conference*, and nothing more. One thing must not be forgotten, namely, that the *majority* of the revolutionary people, the poor, embittered peasants, are not represented in it. It is a conference of a *minority of the people*—this obvious truth must not be forgotten. It would be a big mistake, sheer parliamentary cretinism on our part, if we were to regard the Democratic Conference as a parliament; for even *if it were* to proclaim itself a permanent and sovereign parliament of the revolution, it would nevertheless *decide nothing*. The power of decision lies *outside it* in the working-class quarters of Petrograd and Moscow.

All the objective conditions exist for a successful insurrection. We have the exceptional advantage of a situation in which *only* our victory in the insurrection can put an end to that most painful thing on earth, vacillation, which has worn the people out; in which *only* our victory in the insurrection will give the peasants land immediately; a situation in which *only our* victory in the insurrection can *foil* the game of a separate peace directed against the revolution—foil it by publicly proposing a fuller, juster and earlier peace, a peace that will *benefit* the revolution.

Finally, our Party alone *can*, by a victorious insurrection,

save Petrograd; for if our proposal for peace is rejected, if we do not secure even an armistice, then *we* shall become "defencists", we shall place ourselves *at the head of the war parties*, we shall be the *war party par excellence*, and we shall conduct the war in a truly revolutionary manner. We shall take away all the bread and boots from the capitalists. We shall leave them only crusts and dress them in bast shoes. We shall send all the bread and footwear to the front.

And then we shall save Petrograd.

The resources, both material and spiritual, for a truly revolutionary war in Russia are still immense; the chances are a hundred to one that the Germans will grant us at least an armistice. And to secure an armistice now would in itself mean to win the *whole world*.

\* \* \*

Having recognised the absolute necessity for an insurrection of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow in order to save the revolution and to save Russia from a "separate" partition by the imperialists of both groups, we must first adapt our political tactics at the Conference to the conditions of the growing insurrection; secondly, we must show that it is not only in words that we accept Marx's idea that insurrection must be treated as an art.

At the Conference we must immediately cement the Bolshevik group, without striving after numbers, and without fearing to leave the waverers in the waverers' camp. They are more useful to the cause of the revolution *there* than in the camp of the resolute and devoted fighters.

We must draw up a brief declaration from the Bolsheviks, emphasising in no uncertain manner the irrelevance of long speeches and of "speeches" in general, the necessity for immediate action to save the revolution, the absolute necessity for a complete break with the bourgeoisie, for the removal of the present government, in its entirety, for a complete rupture with the Anglo-French imperialists, who are preparing a "separate" partition of Russia, and for the immediate transfer of all power to *revolutionary democrats, headed by the revolutionary proletariat*.

Our declaration must give the briefest and most trenchant formulation of *this* conclusion in connection with the programme proposals of peace for the peoples, land for the peasants, confiscation of scandalous profits, and a check on the scandalous sabotage of production by the capitalists.

The briefer and more trenchant the declaration, the better. Only two other highly important points must be clearly indicated in it, namely, that the people are worn out by the vacilla-



tions, that they are fed up with the irresolution of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks; and that we are definitely breaking with these *parties* because they have betrayed the revolution.

And another thing. By immediately proposing a peace without annexations, by immediately breaking with the Allied imperialists and with all imperialists, either we shall at once obtain an armistice, or the entire revolutionary proletariat will rally to the defence of the country, and a really just, really revolutionary war will then be waged by revolutionary democrats under the leadership of the proletariat.

Having read this declaration, and having appealed for *decisions* and not talk, for *action* and not resolution-writing, we must *dispatch* our entire group to the *factories and the barracks*. Their place is there, the pulse of life is there, there is the source of salvation for our revolution, and there is the motive force of the Democratic Conference.

There, in ardent and impassioned speeches, we must explain our programme and put the alternative: either the Conference adopts it *in its entirety*, or else insurrection. There is no middle course. Delay is impossible. The revolution is dying.

By putting the question in this way, by concentrating our entire group in the factories and barracks, *we shall be able to determine the right moment to start the insurrection*.

In order to treat insurrection in a Marxist way, i.e., as an art, we must at the same time, without losing a single moment, organise a *headquarters* of the insurgent detachments, distribute our forces, move the reliable regiments to the most important points, surround the Alexandrinsky Theatre, occupy the Peter and Paul Fortress,<sup>177</sup> arrest the General Staff and the government, and move against the officer cadets and the Savage Division those detachments which would rather die than allow the enemy to approach the strategic points of the city. We must mobilise the armed workers and call them to fight the last desperate fight, occupy the telegraph and the telephone exchange at once, move *our* insurrection headquarters to the central telephone exchange and connect it by telephone with all the factories, all the regiments, all the points of armed fighting, etc.

Of course, this is all by way of example, only to *illustrate* the fact that at the present moment it is impossible to remain loyal to Marxism, to remain loyal to the revolution *unless insurrection is treated as an art*.

N. Lenin

Written September 13-14 (26-27), 1917

First published in 1921  
in the magazine *Proletarskaya Revolyutsia* No

Collected Works, Vol. 26,  
pp. 22-27

---

## FROM A PUBLICIST'S DIARY

### THE MISTAKES OF OUR PARTY

Friday, September 22, 1917

The more one reflects on the meaning of the so-called Democratic Conference, and the more attentively one observes from outside—and it is said that the bystander sees most—the more firmly convinced one becomes that our Party committed a mistake by participating in it. We should have boycotted it. One may ask if there is any use in analysing such a question since the past cannot be remedied. Such an objection to criticising the tactics of yesterday, however, would be clearly unfounded. We have always condemned, and as Marxists we must condemn, the tactics of those who live “from hand to mouth”. Momentary success is not enough for us. In general, plans calculated for a minute or a day are not enough for us. We must constantly test ourselves by a *study* of the chain of political events in their entirety, in their causal connection, in their results. By analysing the errors of yesterday, we learn to avoid errors today and tomorrow.

A new revolution is obviously maturing in the country, a revolution of *other* classes (other than those that carried out the revolution against tsarism). At that time it was a revolution of the proletariat, the peasantry and the bourgeoisie in alliance with Anglo-French finance capital against tsarism.

The revolution now maturing is one of the proletariat and the majority of the peasants, more specifically, of the poor peasants, against the bourgeoisie, against its ally, Anglo-French finance capital, and against its government apparatus headed by the Bonapartist Kerensky.

At the moment we shall not dwell on the facts testifying to the rise of a new revolution, since, judging by the articles in *Rabochy Put*,<sup>178</sup> our Central Organ, the Party has already made clear its views on this point. The new revolutionary upsurge seems to be a phenomenon commonly recognised by the Party. Data on this pro-

cess of maturing, of course, still have to be summarised, but they must form the subject of other articles.

At the present moment it is more important to call the closest attention to the class differences between the old revolution and the new, to weigh up the political situation and our tasks from the point of view of this basic fact, class relations. At the time of the first revolution the vanguard was formed by the workers and soldiers, i.e., by the proletariat and the advanced sections of the peasantry.

This vanguard *carried along* not only many of the worst, vacillating elements of the petty bourgeoisie (remember the indecision of the Mensheviks and Trudoviks on the question of a republic), but also the monarchist party of the Cadets, the liberal bourgeoisie, thereby making it a republican party. Why was such a change possible?

Because economic domination is everything to the bourgeoisie, and the form of political domination is of very little importance; the bourgeoisie can rule just as well under a republic, its domination is even more certain under a republic, in the sense that under a republican political order, no changes in the composition of the government or in the composition and the grouping of the ruling parties affect the bourgeoisie.

Of course, the bourgeoisie stood for and will stand for a monarchy, because the cruder armed protection of capital by monarchist institutions is more obvious and "closer" to all the capitalists and landowners. However, under a strong pressure "from below", the bourgeoisie has always and everywhere "reconciled" itself to a republic, as long as it could maintain its economic domination.

The relation of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, i.e., the *majority* of the people, in respect of the bourgeoisie and Allied (and world) imperialism is such that it is *impossible* for them to "carry" the bourgeoisie *with them*. Moreover, the upper strata of the *petty* bourgeoisie and the more well-to-do strata of the *democratic* petty bourgeoisie are patently against a new revolution. This fact is so obvious that there is no need to dwell on it here. The Lieberdants, Tseretelis and Chernovs illustrate this most clearly.

The class relations have changed. This is the crux of the matter.

Different classes now stand "on the one and the other side of the barricade".

That is the main thing.

That, and that *alone*, is the *scientific* reason for speaking of a *new* revolution which—arguing purely theoretically, taking the question in the abstract—could be accomplished legally if, for instance, the Constituent Assembly, convoked by the bourgeoisie, produced a majority opposed to the bourgeoisie, if the majority belonged to the parties of the workers and poor peasants.

The objective relations of the classes, their role (economic and political) outside and inside representative institutions of the given type; the rise or decline of the revolution; the relation of extra-parliamentary to parliamentary means of struggle—these are the chief, the basic objective facts which must be considered if the tactics of boycott or participation are to be deduced in a Marxist way and not arbitrarily, according to our “sympathies”.

The experience of our revolution clearly demonstrates how to approach the boycott question in a Marxist way.

Why did the boycott of the Bulygin Duma prove correct tactics?

Because it was in accordance with the objective alignment of social forces in their development. It provided the maturing revolution with a slogan for the overthrow of an old order which, to distract the people from the revolution, was convoking a clumsily fabricated compromise institution (the Bulygin Duma) which did not show promise of any earnest “anchoring” in parliamentarism. The extra-parliamentary means of struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry were stronger. These are the elements that went into shaping the correct tactics of boycotting the Bulygin Duma, tactics which took account of the objective situation.

Why did the tactics of boycotting the Third Duma prove incorrect?

Because they were based only on the “catchiness” of the boycott slogan and on the revulsion felt towards the brutal reaction of the June Third “pigsty”. The objective situation, however, was such that on the one hand the revolution was in a state of collapse and declining fast. For the upsurge of the revolution a parliamentary base (even inside a “pigsty”) was of tremendous political importance, since extra-parliamentary means of propaganda, agitation and organisation were almost non-existent or extremely weak. On the other hand, the most openly reactionary nature of the Third Duma did not prevent it from being an organ reflecting real class relations, namely, the Stolypin combination of the monarchy and the bourgeoisie. This new relation of classes was something the country had to get rid of.

These very elements shaped the tactics of participation in the Third Duma that took proper account of the objective situation.

It is sufficient to give thought to these lessons gained from experience and the conditions required by a Marxist approach to the question of boycott or participation, to realise that participation in the Democratic Conference, the Democratic Council or the Pre-parliament would be wrong tactics.

On the one hand, a new revolution is maturing. The war is on the upgrade. The extra-parliamentary means of propaganda, agitation and organisation are tremendous. The “parliamentary” tribune in the given Pre-parliament is insignificant. On the other

hand, this Pre-parliament neither reflects nor serves a new relation of classes; for instance, the peasantry is here *more poorly* represented than in the already existing organs (Soviets of Peasants' Deputies). The Pre-parliament is in substance a Bonapartist *fraud*, not only because the filthy gang of the Lieberdants,<sup>179</sup> Tseretelis and Chernovs, together with Kerensky and Co., *have given* this Tsereteli-Bulygin Duma a *fake*, hand-picked composition, but also more profoundly because the only aim of the Pre-parliament is to trick the masses, to deceive the workers and peasants, to distract them from the new upsurge of the revolution, to dazzle the eyes of the oppressed classes by a new dress for the *old*, long tried-out, bedraggled, threadbare "coalition" with the bourgeoisie (i.e., the bourgeoisie's transformation of Tsereteli and Co. into jesters helping to subordinate the people to imperialism and the imperialist war).

"We are weak now," said the tsar in August 1905 to his feudal landowners. "Our power is wavering. The tide of the workers' and peasants' revolution is rising. We must trick the 'plain man', we must dangle something before his eyes. . . ."

"We are weak now," says the present "tsar", the Bonapartist Kerensky, to the Cadets, the non-party Tit Tityches, Plekhanovs, Breshkovskayas and Co. "Our power is tottering. A wave of workers' and peasants' revolution against the bourgeoisie is rising. We must hoodwink the democrats by dyeing in new colours that jester's costume which the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik 'leaders of revolutionary democracy', our dear friends the Tseretelis and Chernovs, have been wearing to fool the people since May 6, 1917. We can easily dangle a 'Pre-parliament' before their eyes."

"We are strong now," said the tsar to his feudal landowners in June 1907. "The wave of workers' and peasants' revolution is receding, but we cannot maintain ourselves as of old; deception alone will not suffice. We must have a new policy in the village, we must have a new economic and political bloc with the Guchkovs and Milyukovs, with the bourgeoisie."

It is in this way that the three situations, August 1905, September 1917, and June 1907, may be presented to illustrate most vividly the objective basis for the boycott tactics and its connection with class relations. The oppressed classes are always being deceived by the oppressors, but the meaning of this deception differs at different moments in history. Tactics cannot be based on the bare fact that the oppressors deceive the people; tactics must be shaped after analysing class relations *in their entirety* and the development of both extra-parliamentary and parliamentary struggle.

Participation in the Pre-parliament is *incorrect* tactics that does not correspond to the objective relations of classes, to the objective conditions of the moment.

We should have boycotted the Democratic Conference; we all erred by not doing so, but mistakes are no crime. We shall correct the mistake only if we have a sincere desire to support the revolutionary struggle of the masses, only if we give earnest thought to the objective foundations of our tactics.

We must boycott the Pre-parliament. We must leave it and go to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, to the trade unions, to the masses in general. We must call on *them* to struggle. We must give *them* a correct and clear slogan: disperse the Bonapartist gang of Kerensky and *his* fake Pre-parliament, with this Tsereteli-Bulygin Duma. The Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, even after the Kornilov revolt, refused to accept our compromise of peacefully transferring the power to the Soviets (in which we *then* had *no* majority); they have again sunk into the morass of filthy and mean bargaining with the Cadets. Down with the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries! Struggle against them ruthlessly. Expel them ruthlessly from all revolutionary organisations. No negotiations, no communication with those *friends of the Kishkins*, the friends of the Kornilovite landowners and capitalists.

Saturday, September 23

Trotsky was for the boycott. Bravo, Comrade Trotsky!

Boycottism was defeated in the Bolshevik group at the Democratic Conference.

Long live the boycott!

We cannot and must not under any circumstances reconcile ourselves to participation. A group at one of the conferences is not the highest organ of the party and even the decisions of the highest organs are subject to revision on the basis of experience.

We must at all costs strive to have the boycott question solved both at a plenary meeting of the Executive Committee and at an extraordinary Party congress. The boycott question must now be made the platform for elections to the Congress and for *all* elections inside the Party. We must draw the *masses* into the discussion of this question. Class-conscious workers must take the matter into their own hands, organise the discussion, and exert pressure on "those at the *top*".

There is not the slightest doubt that at the "top" of our Party there are noticeable vacillations that may become *ruinous*, because the struggle is developing; under certain conditions, at a certain moment, vacillations may *ruin* the cause. We must put all our forces into the struggle, we must uphold the correct line of the party of the revolutionary proletariat before it is too late.

Not all is well with the "parliamentary" leaders of our Party; greater attention must be paid to them, there must be greater workers' supervision over them; the competency of parliamentary groups must be more clearly defined.

Our Party's mistake is obvious. The fighting party of the advanced class need not fear mistakes. What it should fear is persistence in a mistake, refusal to admit and correct a mistake out of a false sense of shame.

Sunday, September 24

The Congress of Soviets has been postponed till October 20. The tempo of Russian life is such that this almost means postponing it to the Greek Calends.<sup>180</sup> The farce staged by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks after April 20-21 is being repeated for the second time.

First published in  
the magazine *Proletarskaya*  
*Revolutsia* No 3, 1924

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 52-58

---

## THE CRISIS HAS MATURED<sup>142</sup>

### I

The end of September undoubtedly marked a great turning-point in the history of the Russian revolution and, to all appearances, of the world revolution as well.

The world working-class revolution began with the action of individuals, whose boundless courage represented everything honest that remained of that decayed official "socialism" which is in reality social-chauvinism. Liebknecht in Germany, Adler in Austria, MacLean in Britain—these are the best-known names of the isolated heroes who have taken upon themselves the arduous role of forerunners of the world revolution.

The second stage in the historical preparation for this revolution was a widespread mass discontent, expressing itself in the split of the official parties, in illegal publications and in street demonstrations. The protest against the war became stronger, and the number of victims of government persecution increased. The prisons of countries famed for their observance of law and even for their freedom—Germany, France, Italy and Britain—became filled with tens and hundreds of internationalists, opponents of the war and advocates of a working-class revolution.

The third stage has now begun. This stage may be called the eve of revolution. Mass arrests of party leaders in free Italy, and particularly the beginning of *mutinies* in the German army,<sup>181</sup> are indisputable symptoms that a great turning-point is at hand, that we are *on the eve of a world-wide revolution*.

Even before this there were, no doubt, individual cases of mutiny among the troops in Germany, but they were so small, so weak and isolated that it was possible to hush them up—and that was the chief way of checking the *mass contagion* of seditious action. Finally, there developed such a movement in the navy that it was *impossible* to hush it up, despite all the severity of the German



regime of military servitude, severity elaborated with amazing minuteness of detail and observed with incredible pedantry.

Doubt is out of the question. We are on the threshold of a world proletarian revolution. And since of all the proletarian internationalists in all countries only we Russian Bolsheviks enjoy a measure of freedom—we have a legal party and a score or so of papers, we have the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals on our side, and we have the support of a *majority* of the people in a time of revolution—to us the saying, "To whom much has been given, of him much shall be required", in all justice can and must be applied.

## II

The crucial point of the revolution in Russia has undoubtedly arrived.

In a peasant country, and under a revolutionary, republican government which enjoys the support of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties that only yesterday dominated petty-bourgeois democracy, a *peasant revolt* is developing.

Incredible as this is, it is a fact.

We Bolsheviks are not surprised by this fact. We have always said that the government of the notorious "coalition" with the bourgeoisie is a government that *betrays* democracy and the revolution, that it is a government of *imperialist* slaughter, a government that *protects* the capitalists and landowners *from* the people.

Owing to the deception practised by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, there still exists in Russia, under a republic and in a time of revolution, a government of capitalists and landowners side by side with the Soviets. This is the bitter and sinister reality. Is it then surprising, in view of the incredible hardship inflicted on the people by prolonging the imperialist war and by its consequences, that a peasant revolt has begun and is spreading in Russia?

Is it then surprising that the enemies of the Bolsheviks, the leaders of the *official* Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the very party that supported the "coalition" all along, the party that until the last few days or weeks had the majority of the people on its side, the party that continues to harry and abuse the "new" Socialist-Revolutionaries,<sup>182</sup> who have realised that the policy of coalition is a betrayal of the interests of the peasants—is it surprising that these leaders of the official Socialist-Revolutionary Party wrote the following in an editorial in their official organ, *Dyelo Naroda* of September 29:

"So far practically nothing has been done to put an end to the relations of bondage that still prevail in the villages of central Russia. . . . The bill for the regulation of land relations in the countryside, which was introduced in the Provisional Government long ago, and which has even passed through such a purgatory as the Judicial Conference, has got hopelessly stuck in some office. . . . Are we not right in asserting that our republican government is still a long way from having rid itself of the old habits of the tsarist administration, and that the dead hand of Stolypin is still making itself strongly felt in the methods of the revolutionary ministers?"

This is written by the official Socialist-Revolutionaries! Just think: the supporters of the coalition are *forced* to admit that in a peasant country, after seven months of revolution, "practically nothing has been done to put an end to the bondage" of the peasants, to their enslavement by the landowners! These Socialist-Revolutionaries are *forced* to give the name of *Stolypins* to their colleague, Kerensky, and his gang of ministers.

Could we get more eloquent testimony than this from the camp of our opponents, not only to the effect that the coalition has collapsed and that the official Socialist-Revolutionaries who tolerate Kerensky have become an *anti-popular, anti-peasant and counter-revolutionary* party, but also that the whole Russian revolution has reached a turning-point?

A peasant revolt in a peasant country against the government of the Socialist-Revolutionary Kerensky, the Mensheviks Nikitin and Gvozdyov, and other ministers who represent capital and the interests of the landowners! The crushing of this revolt by *military measures* by a republican government!

In the face of such facts, can one remain a conscientious champion of the proletariat and yet deny that a crisis has matured, that the revolution is passing through an extremely critical moment, that the government's victory over the peasant revolt would now sound the death knell of the revolution, would be the final triumph of the Kornilov revolt?

### III

It is obvious that if in a peasant country, after seven months of a democratic republic, matters could come to a peasant revolt, it irrefutably proves that the revolution is suffering nation-wide collapse, that it is experiencing a crisis of unprecedented severity, and that the forces of counter-revolution have gone the *limit*.

That is obvious. In the face of such a fact as a peasant revolt all other political symptoms, even were they to contradict the fact that a nation-wide crisis is maturing, would have no significance whatsoever.

But on the contrary, all the symptoms do indicate that a nation-wide crisis has matured.



Next to the agrarian question, the most important question in Russia's state affairs is the national question, particularly for the petty-bourgeois masses of the population. And at the "Democratic" Conference, which was fixed by Mr. Tsereteli and Co., we find that the "national" curia takes second place for radicalism, yielding only to the trade unions, and *exceeding* the curia of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the percentage of votes cast *against* the coalition (40 out of 55). The Kerensky government—a government suppressing the peasant revolt—is withdrawing the revolutionary troops from Finland in order to strengthen the reactionary Finnish bourgeoisie. In the Ukraine, the conflicts of the Ukrainians in general, and of the Ukrainian troops in particular, with the government are becoming more and more frequent.

Furthermore, let us take the army, which in war-time plays an exceptionally big role in all state affairs. We find that the army in Finland and the fleet in the Baltic have completely *parted ways* with the government. We have the testimony of the officer Dubasov, a non-Bolshevik, who speaks in the name of the whole front and declares in a manner more revolutionary than that of any Bolsheviks that the soldiers will not fight any longer.<sup>183</sup> We have governmental reports stating that the soldiers are in a state of "agitation" and that it is impossible to guarantee the maintenance of "order" (i.e., participation of these troops in the suppression of the peasant revolt). We have, finally, the voting in Moscow, where fourteen thousand out of seventeen thousand soldiers voted for the Bolsheviks.

This vote in the elections to the district councils in Moscow is in general one of the most striking symptoms of the profound change which has taken place in the mood of the whole nation. It is generally known that Moscow is more petty-bourgeois than Petrograd. It is a fact frequently corroborated and indisputable that the Moscow proletariat has an incomparably greater number of connections with the countryside, that it has greater sympathy for the peasant and is closer to the sentiments of the peasant.

In Moscow the vote cast for the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks nevertheless dropped from 70 per cent in June to 18 per cent. There can be no doubt that the petty bourgeoisie and the people have turned away from the coalition. The Cadets have increased their strength from 17 to 30 per cent, but they remain a minority, a hopeless minority, despite the fact that they have obviously been joined by the "Right" Socialist-Revolutionaries and the "Right" Mensheviks. *Russkiye Uedomosti*<sup>184</sup> states that the *absolute* number of votes cast for the Cadets fell from 67,000 to 62,000. Only the votes cast for the Bolsheviks increased—from

34,000 to 82,000. They received 47 per cent of the total vote. There can be no shadow of doubt that we, together with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, now have a majority in the Soviets, in the army, and *in the country*.

Among the symptoms that have not only a symptomatic, but also a very real significance, is the fact that the armies of railway and postal employees, who are of immense importance from the general economic, political and military point of view, continue to be in sharp conflict with the government,<sup>185</sup> even the Menshevik defencists are dissatisfied with "their" Minister, Nikitin, and the official Socialist-Revolutionaries call Kerensky and Co. "Stolypins". Is it not clear that if such "support" of the government by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries has any value at all it can be only a negative value?

#### IV

. . . . .

#### V

Yes, the leaders of the Central Executive Committee are pursuing the correct tactics of defending the bourgeoisie and the landowners. And there is not the slightest doubt that if the Bolsheviks allowed themselves to be caught in the trap of constitutional illusions, "faith" in the Congress of Soviets and in the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, "waiting" for the Congress of Soviets, and so forth--these Bolsheviks would most certainly be *miserable traitors* to the proletarian cause.

They would be traitors to the cause, for by their conduct they would be betraying the German revolutionary workers who have started a revolt in the navy. To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets and so forth under such circumstances would be a *betrayal of internationalism*, a betrayal of the cause of the world socialist revolution.

For internationalism consists of *deeds* and not phrases, not expressions of solidarity, not resolutions.

The Bolsheviks would be traitors to the *peasants*, for to tolerate the suppression of the peasant revolt by a government which *even Dyelo Naroda* compares with the Stolypin government would be *to ruin* the whole revolution, to ruin it for good. An outcry is raised about anarchy and about the increasing indifference of the people, but what else can the people be but indifferent to the elections, when the peasants have been *driven to revolt* while the

so-called "revolutionary democrats" are patiently tolerating its suppression by military force!

The Bolsheviks would be traitors to democracy and to freedom, for to tolerate the suppression of the peasant revolt at such a moment would *mean* allowing the elections to the Constituent Assembly to be fixed *in exactly the same way* as the Democratic Conference and the "Pre-parliament" were fixed, only even worse and more crudely.

The crisis has matured. The whole future of the Russian revolution is at stake. The honour of the Bolshevik Party is in question. The whole future of the international workers' revolution for socialism is at stake.

The crisis has matured. . . .

September 29, 1917

---

Everything to this point may be published, but what follows is *to be distributed* among the members of the *Central Committee, the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, and the Soviets.*

## VI

What, then, is to be done? We must *aussprechen was ist*, "state the facts", admit the truth that there is a tendency, or an opinion, in our Central Committee and among the leaders of our Party which favours *waiting* for the Congress of Soviets, and is *opposed* to taking power immediately, is *opposed* to an immediate insurrection. That tendency, or opinion, must be *overcome*.<sup>186</sup>

Otherwise, the Bolsheviks will cover themselves with eternal *shame* and *destroy themselves* as a party.

For to miss such a moment and to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be *utter idiocy*, or *sheer treachery*.

It would be sheer treachery to the German workers. Surely we should not wait until their revolution *begins*. In that case even the Lieberdans would be in favour of "supporting" it. But it *cannot* begin as long as Kerensky, Kishkin and Co. are in power.

It would be sheer treachery to the peasants. To allow the peasant revolt to be suppressed when we control the Soviets of both *capitals* would be to *lose*, and *justly lose*, every ounce of the peasants' confidence. In the eyes of the peasants we would be putting ourselves on a level with the Lieberdans and other scoundrels.

To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets would be utter idiocy, for it would mean losing *weeks* at a time when weeks and even days decide *everything*. It would mean faint-heartedly *renouncing* power, for on November 1-2 it will have become impossible

to take power (both politically and technically, since the Cossacks would be mobilised for the day of the insurrection so foolishly "appointed"\*).

To "wait" for the Congress of Soviets is idiocy, for the Congress will *give nothing, and can give nothing!*

"Moral" importance? Strange, indeed, to talk of the "importance" of resolutions and conversations with the Lieberdians when we know that the Soviets *support* the peasants and that the peasant revolt is *being suppressed!* We would be reducing the *Soviets* to the status of wretched debating parlours. First defeat Kerensky, then call the Congress.

The Bolsheviks are now *guaranteed* the success of the insurrection: (1) we can\*\* (if we do not "wait" for the Soviet Congress) launch a *surprise* attack from three points—from Petrograd, from Moscow and from the Baltic fleet; (2) we have slogans that guarantee us support—down with the government that is suppressing the revolt of the peasants against the landowners! (3) we have a majority *in the country*; (4) the disorganisation among the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries is complete; (5) we are technically in a position to take power in Moscow (where the start might even be made, so as to catch the enemy unawares); (6) we have *thousands* of armed workers and soldiers in Petrograd who could *at once* seize the Winter Palace, the General Staff building, the telephone exchange and the large printing presses. Nothing will be able to drive us out, while agitational work in the *army* will be such as to make it *impossible* to combat this government of peace, of land for the peasants, and so forth.

If we were to attack at once, suddenly, from three points, Petrograd, Moscow and the Baltic fleet, the chances are a hundred to one that we would succeed with smaller sacrifices than on July 3-5, because *the troops will not advance* against a government of peace. Even though Kerensky *already* has "loyal" cavalry, etc., in Petrograd, if we were to attack from two sides, he would be compelled to *surrender* since *we* enjoy the sympathy of the army. If with such chances as we have at present we do not take power, then all talk of transferring the power to the Soviets becomes *a lie*.

To refrain from taking power now, to "wait", to indulge in talk in the Central Executive Committee, to confine ourselves to

\* To "convene" the Congress of Soviets for October 20 in order to decide upon "taking power"—how does that differ from foolishly "appointing" an insurrection? It is possible to take power now, whereas on October 20-29 you will not be given a chance to

\*\* What has the Party done to *study* the disposition of the troops, etc.? What has it done to conduct the insurrection as an "art"? Mere talk in the Central Executive Committee, and so on!

"fighting for the organ" (of the Soviet), "fighting for the Congress", *is to doom the revolution to failure.*

In view of the fact that the Central Committee has *even left unanswered* the persistent demands I have been making for such a policy ever since the beginning of the Democratic Conference, in view of the fact that the Central Organ is *deleting* from my articles all references to such glaring errors on the part of the Bolsheviks as the shameful decision to participate in the Pre-parliament, the admission of Mensheviks to the Presidium of the Soviet, etc., etc — I am compelled to regard this as a "subtle" hint at the unwillingness of the Central Committee even to consider this question, a subtle hint that I should keep my mouth shut, and as a proposal for me to retire.

I am compelled to *tender my resignation from the Central Committee*, which I hereby do, reserving for myself freedom to campaign among the *rank and file* of the Party and at the Party Congress.

For it is my profound conviction that if we "wait" for the Congress of Soviets and let the present moment pass, we shall *ruin* the revolution.

*N. Lenin*

September 29

P. S. There are a number of facts which serve to prove that *even* the Cossack troops will not go against a government of peace! And how many are there? Where are they? And will not the entire army dispatch units *for our support?*

Sections I-III and V published  
on October 20 (7) 1917  
in the newspaper *Rabochy Put* No. 30,  
section VI first published in 1924

*Collected Works* Vol. 26,  
pp. 74-85



---

# CAN THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?

## FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

The present pamphlet, as is evident from the text, was written at the end of September and was finished on October 1, 1917.

The October 25 Revolution has transferred the question raised in this pamphlet from the sphere of theory to the sphere of practice.

This question must now be answered by deeds, not words. The theoretical arguments advanced against the Bolsheviks taking power were feeble in the extreme. These arguments have been shot to pieces.

The task now is for the advanced class—the proletariat—to prove *in practice* the viability of the workers' and peasants' government. All class-conscious workers, all the active and honest peasants, all working and exploited people, will do everything they can to solve the immense historic question in practice.

To work, everybody to work, the cause of the world socialist revolution must and will triumph.

St. Petersburg, November 9, 1917

*N. Lenin*

Published in 1918  
in the pamphlet N. Lenin  
*Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*,  
'Soldiers' and Peasants' Library' Series,  
St. Petersburg

On what are all trends agreed, from *Rech* to *Novaya Zhizn* inclusively, from the Kornilovite Cadets to the semi-Bolsheviks, *all*, except the Bolsheviks?

They all agree that the Bolsheviks will either never dare take over full state power alone, or, if they do dare, and do take power, they will not be able to retain it even for the shortest while.

If anybody asserts that the question of the Bolsheviks alone taking over full state power is a totally unfeasible political question, that only a swelled-headed "fanatic" of the worst kind can regard it as feasible, we refute this assertion by quoting the exact statements of the most responsible and most influential political parties and trends of various "hues".

But let me begin with a word or two about the first of the questions mentioned—will the Bolsheviks dare take over full state power alone? I have already had occasion, at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, to answer this question in the affirmative in no uncertain manner by a remark that I shouted from my seat during one of Tsereteli's ministerial speeches.<sup>187</sup> And I have not met in the press, or heard, any statements by Bolsheviks to the effect that we ought not to take power alone. I still maintain that a political party—and the party of the advanced class in particular—would have no right to exist, would be unworthy of the name of party, would be a nonentity in any sense, if it refused to take power when opportunity offers.

We shall now quote statements by the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and semi-Bolsheviks (I would prefer to say quarter-Bolsheviks) on the question that interests us.

The leading article in *Rech* of September 16:

"Discord and confusion reigned in the Alexandrinsky Theatre, and the socialist press reflects the same picture. Only the views of the Bolsheviks are definite and straightforward. At the Conference, they are the views of the

minority. In the Soviets, they represent a constantly growing trend. But in spite of all their verbal pugnacity, their boastful phrases and display of self-confidence, the Bolsheviks, except for a few fanatics, are brave only in words. They would not attempt to take 'full power' on their own accord. Disorganisers and disrupters *par excellence*, they are really cowards who in their heart of hearts are fully aware of both their own intrinsic ignorance and the ephemeral nature of their present successes. They know as well as we all do that the first day of their ultimate triumph would also be the first day of their precipitous fall. Irresponsible by their very nature, anarchists in method and practice, they should be regarded only as a trend of political thought, or rather, as one of its aberrations. The best way to get rid of Bolshevism for many a year, to banish it, would be to place the country's fate in the hands of its leaders. And if it were not for the awareness that experiments of this kind are impermissible and fatal, one might in desperation decide on even this heroic measure. Happily, we repeat, these dismal heroes of the day are not by any means actually out to seize full power. Not under any circumstances are they capable of constructive work. Thus, all their definite and straightforward views are confined to the political rostrum, to soap-box oratory. For practical purposes their position cannot be taken into consideration from any point of view. In one respect, however, it has some practical consequence: it unites all other shades of 'socialist thought' opposed to it. . . ."

This is the way the Cadets reason. Here, however, is the view of the biggest, "ruling and governing", party in Russia, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, also expressed in an unsigned, i.e., editorial, leading article in their official organ *Dyelo Naroda* of September 21:

... "If the bourgeoisie refuse, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, to work with the democracy on the basis of the platform that was endorsed by the Conference, then the *coalition must arise from within the Conference itself*. This would be a serious sacrifice on the part of the supporters of the coalition, *but even those campaigning for the idea of a 'pure line' of power will have to agree to it*. We are afraid, however, that agreement may not be reached here. In that case a third and final combination remains, namely: the government *must* be organised by that half of the Conference which on *principle* advocated the idea of a homogeneous government.

"Let us put it definitely: *the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a Cabinet*. With the greatest energy, they imbued the revolutionary democrats with hatred of the coalition, promising them all sorts of benefits as soon as 'compromise' was abandoned, and attributing to the latter all the country's misfortunes.

"If they were aware of what they were doing by their *agitation*, if they were *not deceiving the people*, it is *their duty* to redeem the promissory notes they have been handing out right and left.

"The question is clear.

"Let them not make futile attempts to hid behind hastily concocted theory that it is impossible for them to take power.

"The democracy will not accept these theories.

"At the same time, the advocates of coalition must guarantee them full support. These are the three combinations, the three ways, open to us—there are no others!" (The italics are those of *Dyelo Naroda*.)

This is the way the Socialist-Revolutionaries reason. And here, finally, is the "position" (if attempts to sit between two stools can

be called a position) of the *Novaya Zhizn* "quarter-Bolsheviks", taken from the editorial in *Novaya Zhizn* of September 23.

"If a coalition with Konovalov and Kishkin is formed again, it will mean nothing but a new capitulation by the democracy and the abrogation of the Conference resolution on the formation of a responsible government on the platform of August 14. . . .

"A homogeneous ministry of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries will be able to feel its responsibility as little as the responsible socialist ministers felt it in the coalition cabinet. . . . This government would not only be incapable of rallying the 'live forces' of the revolution around itself, but would not even be able to count on any active support from its vanguard—the proletariat.

"But the formation of another type of homogeneous cabinet, a government of the 'proletariat and poor peasants', would be, not a better, but an even worse way out of the situation, in fact it would not be a way out at all, but sheer bankruptcy. True, nobody is advancing such a slogan except in casual, timid and later systematically 'explained away' comments in *Rabochy Put*."

(This glaring untruth is "boldly" written by responsible journalists who have forgotten even the *Dyelo Naroda* editorial of September 21.)

"Formally, the Bolsheviks have now revived the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets'. It was withdrawn after the July days, when the Soviets, represented by the Central Executive Committee, definitely adopted an active anti-Bolshevik policy. Now, however, not only can the 'Soviet line' be regarded as straightened out, but there is every ground to assume that at the proposed Congress of Soviets the Bolsheviks will have a majority. Under such circumstances, the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets', resurrected by the Bolsheviks, is a 'tactical line' for achieving precisely the dictatorship of the proletariat and the 'poor peasants'. True, the Soviets also imply the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies; the Bolshevik slogan therefore implies a power resting on the overwhelmingly greater part of the entire democracy of Russia. In that case, however, the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' loses all independent significance, for it makes the Soviets almost identical in composition to the Pre-parliament set up by the Conference. . . ." (*Novaya Zhizn*'s assertion is a brazen lie, equivalent to declaring that spurious and fraudulent democracy is "almost identical" to democracy: the Pre-parliament is a *sham* which passes off the will of the minority of the people, particularly of Kuskova, Berkenheim, Chaikovsky and Co., as the will of the majority. This is the first point. The second point is that at the Conference even the Peasants' Soviets that had been packed by the Avksentyevs and Chaikovskys gave such a high percentage opposed to the coalition that taken together with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, they would have brought about the *absolute collapse of the coalition*. And the third point is that "Power to the Soviets" means that the power of the Peasants' Soviets would embrace mainly the rural districts, and in the rural

districts the predominance of the *poor* peasants is assured.) "If it is one and the same thing, then the Bolshevik slogan should be immediately withdrawn. If, however, 'Power to the Soviets' is only a disguise for the dictatorship of the proletariat, then such a power would mean precisely the failure and collapse of the revolution.

"Does it need proof that the proletariat, isolated not only from the other classes in the country, but also from the real live forces of the democracy, will not be able either technically to lay hold of the state apparatus and set it in motion in an exceptionally complicated situation, or politically to resist all the pressure by hostile forces that will sweep away not only the proletarian dictatorship, but the entire revolution into the bargain?

"The only power that will answer the requirements of the present situation is a really honest coalition within the democracy."

\* \* \*

We apologise to the reader for quoting these lengthy extracts, but they are absolutely necessary. It is necessary to present a precise picture of the positions taken by the different parties hostile to the Bolsheviks. It is necessary to prove in a definite manner the extremely important fact that *all* these parties have admitted that the question of the Bolsheviks taking full state power alone is not only feasible, but also urgent.

Let us now proceed to examine the arguments which convince "everybody", from the Cadets to the *Novaya Zhizn* people, that the Bolsheviks will not be able to retain power.

The respectable *Rech* advances no arguments whatsoever. It merely pours out upon the Bolsheviks a flood of the choicest and most irate abuse. The extract we quoted shows, among other things, how utterly wrong it would be to say, "Watch out, comrades, for what the enemy advises must certainly be bad", thinking that *Rech* is "provoking" the Bolsheviks to take power. If, instead of weighing up the general and concrete considerations in a practical way, we allow ourselves to be "persuaded" by the plea that the bourgeoisie are "provoking" us to take power, we shall be fooled by the bourgeoisie, for the latter will of course always maliciously prophesy millions of disasters that will result from the Bolsheviks taking power and will always maliciously shout, "It would be better to get rid of the Bolsheviks at one blow and 'for many a year' by allowing them to take power and then crushing them." These cries are also "provocation", if you will, but from a different angle. The Cadets and the bourgeoisie do not by any means "advise", and have never "advised", us to take power; they are only trying to *frighten* us with the allegedly insoluble problems of government.

No. We must not allow ourselves to be frightened by the screams of the frightened bourgeoisie. We must bear firmly in mind that we have never set ourselves "insoluble" social problems, and as for the *perfectly* soluble problem of taking immediate steps towards socialism, which is the only way out of the exceedingly difficult situation, that will be *solved only* by the dictatorship of the proletariat and poor peasants. Victory, and lasting victory, is now more than ever, more than anywhere else, assured for the proletariat in Russia if it takes power.

We shall in a purely practical manner discuss the *concrete* circumstances that make a certain moment unfavourable; but we shall not for a moment allow ourselves to be scared by the savage howls of the bourgeoisie; and we shall not forget that the question of the Bolsheviks taking full power is becoming really *urgent*. Our Party will now be threatened with an immeasurably greater danger if we forget this than if we were to admit that taking power is "premature". In this respect, there can be *nothing* "premature" now: there is every chance in a million, except one or two perhaps, in favour of this.

Concerning the irate abuse poured out by *Rech*, we can, and must, say:

*In savage cries of irritation  
We hear the voice of approbation,  
Not in dulcet sounds of praise.*<sup>188</sup>

That the bourgeoisie hate us so passionately is one of the most striking proofs that we are showing the people the *right* ways and means of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie.

\* \* \*

This time, by way of rare exception, *Dyelo Naroda* did not deign to honour us with its abuse nor did it advance a ghost of an argument. It merely tried, by indirect hints, to *frighten* us with the prospect that "the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a cabinet". I can quite believe that while trying to frighten us, the Socialist-Revolutionaries are themselves sincerely scared to death by the phantom of the frightened liberal. I can equally believe that the Socialist-Revolutionaries do succeed in certain exceptionally high and exceptionally rotten institutions, such as the Central Executive Committee and similar "contact" (i.e., contact with the Cadets, in plain language, hobnobbing with the Cadets) commissions, in scaring some Bolsheviks because, first, the atmosphere in all those Central Executives, Pre-parliaments, etc., is abominable, putrid to the point of nausea, and harmful for *any* man to breathe for any length of time; and secondly, sincerity is contagious, and a sincerely frightened philistine is capable of converting even an individual revolutionary into a philistine for a time.

But however much we may, "humanly" speaking, understand the sincere fright of a Socialist-Revolutionary who has had the misfortune to be a minister in the company of the Cadets, or who is eligible as a minister in the eyes of the Cadets, we would be committing a political error that might only too easily border on treachery to the proletariat if we allowed ourselves to be scared. Let us have your practical arguments, gentlemen! Cherish no hope that we shall allow ourselves to be scared by your fright!

\* \* \*

This time we find practical arguments only in *Novaya Zhizn*. On this occasion the paper comes out in the role of counsel for the bourgeoisie, a role that suits it far better than that of counsel for the defence of the Bolsheviks, which so obviously "shocks" this lady with many good points.<sup>189</sup>

The counsel has advanced six pleas:

(1) the proletariat is "isolated from the other classes in the country";

(2) it is "isolated from the real live forces of the democracy";

(3) it "will not be able technically to lay hold of the state apparatus";

(4) it "will not be able to set this apparatus in motion";

(5) "the situation is exceptionally complicated";

(6) it "will be incapable of resisting all the pressure by hostile forces that will sweep away not only the proletarian dictatorship, but the entire revolution into the bargain".

*Novaya Zhizn* formulates the first plea in a ridiculously clumsy fashion, for in capitalist and semi-capitalist society we know of only three classes: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (which consists mainly of the peasantry), and the proletariat. What sense is there in talking about the proletariat being isolated from the other classes when the point at issue is the proletariat's struggle against the bourgeoisie, revolution against the bourgeoisie?

Evidently, *Novaya Zhizn* wanted to say that the proletariat is isolated from the peasants, for it could not possibly have meant the landowners. It could not, however, say clearly and definitely that the proletariat is now isolated from the peasants, for the utter incorrectness of this assertion would be too obvious.

It is difficult to imagine that in a capitalist country the proletariat should be so little isolated from the petty bourgeoisie—and, mark you, in a revolution *against the bourgeoisie*—as the proletariat now is in Russia. The latest returns of the voting by "curias" for and against coalition with the bourgeoisie in Tsereteli's "Bulygin Duma",<sup>190</sup> i.e., in the notorious "Democratic" Conference, constitute one of the objective and incontrovertible proofs of this. If we take the Soviets' curias we get:

	For coalition	Against
Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies . . .	83	192
Soviets of Peasants' Deputies . . . . .	102	70
<hr/>		
All Soviets . . . . .	185	262

So, the majority as a whole is on the side of the proletarian slogan: *against* coalition with the bourgeoisie. We have seen above that even the Cadets are obliged to admit the growth of Bolshevik influence in the Soviets. And here we have the Conference convened by *yesterday's* leaders in the Soviets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who have an assured majority in the central institutions! Obviously, the *actual* degree to which the Bolsheviks predominate in the Soviets is here *understated*.

Both on the question of coalition with the bourgeoisie and on the question of immediately transferring the landed estates to peasant committees, the Bolsheviks already have a *majority* in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, a *majority of the people*, a majority of the petty bourgeoisie. *Rabochy Put* No. 19 of September 24 quotes from No. 25 of the organ of the Socialist-Revolutionaries *Znamya Truda*<sup>191</sup> a report on a conference of local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies held in Petrograd on September 18. At this conference the Executive Committees of four Peasants' Soviets (Kostroma, Moscow, Samara and Taurida gubernias) voted for an unrestricted coalition. The Executive Committees of *three* gubernias and *two* armies (Vladimir, Ryazan and the Black Sea gubernias) voted in favour of a coalition without the Cadets. The Executive Committees of *twenty-three* gubernias and *four* armies voted against a coalition.

*So, the majority of the peasants are against a coalition!*

So much for the "isolation of the proletariat".

We should note, by the way, that the supporters of a coalition were three outlying gubernias, Samara, Taurida and the Black Sea, where there is a relatively very large number of rich peasants and big landowners who employ hired labour, and also four industrial gubernias (Vladimir, Ryazan, Kostroma and Moscow) in which the peasant bourgeoisie are also stronger than in the majority of the gubernias in Russia. It would be interesting to collect more detailed figures on this question and to ascertain whether information is available concerning the *poor* peasants in the gubernias where there are larger numbers of "*rich*" peasants.

It is interesting, moreover, that the "non-Russian groups" revealed a considerable predominance of opponents of a coalition,



namely, 40 votes against 15. The policy of annexation and open violence pursued by the Bonapartist Kerensky and Co. towards the non-sovereign nations of Russia has borne fruit. Wide sections of the people of the oppressed nations (i.e., including the mass of the petty bourgeoisie) trust the proletariat of Russia more than they do the bourgeoisie, for here history has brought to the fore the struggle for liberation of the oppressed nations against the oppressing nations. The bourgeoisie has despicably betrayed the cause of freedom of the oppressed nations; the proletariat is faithful to the cause of freedom.

At the present time the national and agrarian questions are fundamental questions for the petty-bourgeois sections of the population of Russia. This is indisputable. And on both these questions the proletariat is "*not* isolated"—farther from it than ever. It has the majority of the people behind it. It *alone* is capable of pursuing such a determined, genuinely "revolutionary-democratic" policy on both questions which would immediately ensure the proletarian state power not only the support of the majority of the population, but also a real outburst of revolutionary enthusiasm among the people. This is because, for the first time, the people would not see the ruthless oppression of peasants by landowners and of Ukrainians by Great Russians on the part of the government, as was the case under tsarism, nor the effort to continue the same policy camouflaged in pompous phrases under the republic, nor nagging, insult, chicanery, procrastination, underhand dealing and evasions (all that with which Kerensky rewards the peasants and the oppressed nations), but would receive warm sympathy proved by deeds, immediate and revolutionary measures against the landowners, immediate restitution of *full* freedom for Finland, the Ukraine, Belorussia, for the Moslems, and so on.

The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik gentlemen know this perfectly well, and are therefore dragging in the semi-Cadet bosses of the co-operative societies to help them pursue their *reactionary*-democratic policy *against* the people. That is why they will never dare canvass popular opinion, take a popular referendum, or at least a vote of all the local Soviets, of all the local organisations, concerning definite points of practical policy, for example, whether all the landed estates should at once be handed over to peasant committees, whether certain demands of the Finns or the Ukrainians should be conceded, etc.

Take the question of peace, the crucial issue of today. The proletariat "is isolated from the other classes". . . . On this issue the proletariat truly represents the *whole* nation, all live and honest people *in all* classes, the vast majority of the petty bourgeoisie; because only the proletariat, on achieving power, will *immediately* offer a just peace to all the belligerent nations, because only the

proletariat will dare take genuinely *revolutionary* measures (publication of the secret treaties, and so forth) to achieve the speediest and most just peace possible.

The proletariat is not isolated. The gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn* who are shouting about the proletariat being isolated are only betraying their subjective fear of the bourgeoisie. The objective state of affairs in Russia is undoubtedly such that the proletariat, *precisely at the present time*, is not "isolated" from the majority of the petty bourgeoisie. Precisely now, after the sad experience with the "coalition", the proletariat enjoys the sympathy of the *majority* of the people. *This condition for the retention of power by the Bolsheviks does exist.*

\* \* \*

The second plea is that the proletariat "is isolated from the real live forces of the democracy". What this means is incomprehensible. It is probably "Greek", as the French say in such cases.

The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* would make good ministers. They would be quite suitable as ministers in a Cadet cabinet because all these ministers need is the ability to spout plausible, polished, but utterly meaningless phrases with which to cover up the dirtiest work and which are therefore sure of winning the applause of the imperialists and social-imperialists. The *Novaya Zhizn* writers are sure to earn the applause of the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov and Co. for asserting that the proletariat is isolated from the real live forces of the democracy, because *indirectly* they imply—or will be understood to imply—that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov, Kerensky and Co. are the "live forces of democracy".

This is not true. They are dead forces. The history of the coalition has proved this.

Overawed by the bourgeoisie and by their bourgeois-intellectual environment, the *Novaya Zhizn* people regard as "live" the *Right* wing of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks like *Uolya Naroda*<sup>192</sup>, *Yedinstvo*, and others who in essentials do not differ from the Cadets. We, however, regard as live only those who are connected with the people and not with the kulaks, only those whom the lessons of the coalition have repelled. The "active live forces" of the petty-bourgeois democracy are represented by the Left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. That this wing has gained strength, particularly since the July counter-revolution, is one of the surest objective signs that the proletariat is *not* isolated.

This has been made even more strikingly evident by the very recent swing to the left of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centrists,

as is proved by Chernov's statement on September 24 that his group cannot support the new coalition with Kishkin and Co. This swing to the left of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre, which up to now had constituted the overwhelming majority of the members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, the leading and dominant party from the point of view of the number of votes it obtained in the urban and particularly in the rural districts, proves that the statements we quoted from *Dyelo Naroda* that the democracy must, under certain circumstances, "guarantee full support" for a purely Bolshevik government are at any rate not mere empty phrases.

Facts like the refusal of the Socialist-Revolutionary Centre to support the new coalition with Kishkin, or the predominance of the *opponents* of the coalition among the *Menshevik-defencists* in the provinces (Jordania in the Caucasus, etc.), are objective proof that a certain section of the *people* which has up to now followed the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries *will support* a purely Bolshevik government.

It is precisely from the *live* forces of the democracy that the proletariat of Russia is now not isolated.

\* \* \*

The third plea, that the proletariat "will not be able technically to lay hold of the state apparatus", is, perhaps, the most common and most frequent. It deserves most attention for this reason, and also because it indicates one of the most *serious* and *difficult* tasks that will confront the victorious proletariat. There is no doubt that these tasks will be very difficult, but if we, who call ourselves socialists, indicate this difficulty only to *shirk* these tasks, in practice the distinction between us and the lackeys of the bourgeoisie will be reduced to nought. The difficulty of the tasks of the proletarian revolution should prompt the proletariat's supporters to make a closer and more definite study of the means of carrying out these tasks.

The state apparatus is primarily the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. By saying that the proletariat will not be able technically to lay hold of this apparatus, the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* reveal their utter ignorance and their reluctance to take into account either facts or the arguments long ago cited in Bolshevik literature.

All the *Novaya Zhizn* writers regard themselves, if not as Marxists, then at least as being familiar with Marxism, as educated socialists. But Marx, basing himself on the experience of the Paris Commune, taught that the proletariat *cannot* simply lay hold of the ready-made state machine and use it for its own purposes,

that the proletariat must *smash* this machine and substitute a new one for it (I deal with this in greater detail in a pamphlet, the first part of which is now finished and will soon appear under the title *The State and Revolution. The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution\**). This new type of state machinery was created by the Paris Commune, and the Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are a "state apparatus" of the *same type*. I have indicated this many times since April 4, 1917; it is dealt with in the resolutions of Bolshevik conferences and also in Bolshevik literature. *Novaya Zhizn* could, of course, have expressed its utter disagreement with Marx and with the Bolsheviks, but for a paper that has so often, and so haughtily, scolded the Bolsheviks for their allegedly frivolous attitude to difficult problems to evade this question completely is tantamount to issuing itself a certificate of mental poverty.

The proletariat *cannot* "lay hold of" the "state apparatus" and "set it in motion". But it can *smash* everything that is oppressive, routine, incorrigibly bourgeois in the old state apparatus and substitute its *own*, new apparatus. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies are exactly this apparatus.

That *Novaya Zhizn* has completely forgotten about this "state apparatus" can be called nothing but monstrous. Behaving in this way in their theoretical reasoning the *Novaya Zhizn* people are, in essence, doing in the sphere of political theory what the Cadets are doing in political practice. Because, if the proletariat and the revolutionary democrats *do not* in fact *need* a new state apparatus, then the Soviets lose their *raison d'être*, lose their right to existence, and the Kornilovite Cadets are *right* in trying to reduce the Soviets to nought!

This monstrous theoretical blunder and political blindness on the part of *Novaya Zhizn* is all the more monstrous because even the internationalist Mensheviks (with whom *Novaya Zhizn* formed a bloc during the last City Council elections in Petrograd) have on this question shown some proximity to the Bolsheviks. So, in the declaration of the Soviet majority made by Comrade Martov at the Democratic Conference, we read:

"The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, set up in the first days of the revolution by a mighty burst of creative enthusiasm that stems from the people themselves, constitute the new fabric of the revolutionary state that has replaced the outworn state fabric of the old regime...."

This is a little too flowery; that is to say, rhetoric here covers up lack of clear political thinking. The Soviets have *not yet* replaced

the old "fabric", and this old "fabric" is *not* the state fabric of the old regime, but the state fabric of *both* tsarism *and* of the bourgeois republic. But at any rate, Martov here stands head and shoulders above *Novaya Zhizn*.

The Soviets are a new state apparatus which, in the first place, provides an armed force of workers and peasants; and this force is not divorced from the people, as was the old standing army, but is very closely bound up with the people. From the military point of view this force is incomparably more powerful than previous forces; from the revolutionary point of view, it cannot be replaced by anything else. Secondly, this apparatus provides a bond with the people, with the majority of the people, so intimate, so indissoluble, so easily verifiable and renewable, that nothing even remotely like it existed in the previous state apparatus. Thirdly, this apparatus, by virtue of the fact that its personnel is elected and subject to recall at the people's will without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than any previous apparatus. Fourthly, it provides a close contact with the most varied professions, thereby facilitating the adoption of the most varied and most radical reforms without red tape. Fifthly, it provides an organisational form for the vanguard, i.e., for the most class-conscious, most energetic and most progressive section of the *oppressed* classes, the workers and peasants, and so constitutes an apparatus by means of which the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, train, educate, and lead *the entire vast mass* of these classes, which has up to now stood completely outside of political life and history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of the parliamentary system with those of immediate and direct democracy, i.e., to vest in the people's elected representatives both *legislative and executive functions*. Compared with the bourgeois parliamentary system, this is an advance in democracy's development which is of world-wide, historic significance.

In 1905, our Soviets existed only in embryo, so to speak, as they lived altogether only a few weeks. Clearly, under the conditions of that time, their comprehensive development was out of the question. It is still out of the question in the 1917 Revolution, for a few months is an extremely short period and—this is most important—the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders have *prostituted* the Soviets, have reduced their role to that of a talking-shop, of an accomplice in the compromising policy of the leaders. The Soviets have been rotting and decaying alive under the leadership of the Liebers, Dans, Tseretelis and Chernovs. The Soviets will be able to develop properly, to display their potentialities and capabilities to the full only by taking over *full* state power; for otherwise they have *nothing to do*, otherwise they are either

simply embryos (and to remain an embryo too long is fatal), or playthings. "Dual power" means paralysis for the Soviets.

If the creative enthusiasm of the revolutionary classes had not given rise to the Soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would have been a hopeless cause, for the proletariat could certainly not retain power with the old state apparatus, and it is impossible to create a new apparatus immediately. The sad history of the prostitution of the Soviets by the Tseretelis and Chernovs, the history of the "coalition", is also the history of the liberation of the Soviets from petty-bourgeois illusions, of their passage through the "purgatory" of the practical experience of the utter abomination and filth of *all* and *sundry* bourgeois coalitions. Let us hope that this "purgatory" has steeled rather than weakened the Soviets.

\* \* \*

The chief difficulty facing the proletarian revolution is the establishment on a country-wide scale of the most precise and most conscientious accounting and control, of *workers' control* of the production and distribution of goods.

When the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* argued that in advancing the slogan "workers' control" we were slipping into syndicalism, this argument was an example of the stupid schoolboy method of applying "Marxism" without studying it, just *learning it by rote* in the Struve manner. Syndicalism either repudiates the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, or else relegates it, as it does political power in general, to a back seat. We, however, put it in the forefront. If we simply say in unison with the *Novaya Zhizn* writers: *not* workers' control *but* state control, it is simply a bourgeois-reformist phrase, it is, in essence, a purely Cadet formula, because the Cadets have no objection to the workers *participating* in "state" control. The Kornilovite Cadets know perfectly well that such participation offers the bourgeoisie the best way of fooling the workers, the most subtle way of politically *bribing* all the Gvozdyovs, Nikitins, Prokopoviches, Tseretelis and the rest of that gang.

When we say: "workers' control", always *juxtaposing* this slogan to dictatorship of the proletariat, always putting it *immediately after* the latter, we thereby explain what kind of state we mean. The state is the organ of *class* domination. Of which class? If of the bourgeoisie, then it is the Cadet-Kornilov-"Kerensky" state which has been "Kornilovising" and "Kerenskyising" the working people of Russia for more than six months. If it is of the proletariat, if we are speaking of a proletarian state, *that is*, of the proletarian dictatorship, then workers' control *can* become the country-

wide, all-embracing, omnipresent, most precise and most conscientious *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods.

This is the chief difficulty, the chief task that faces the proletarian, i.e., socialist, revolution. Without the Soviets, this task would be impracticable, at least in Russia. The Soviets *indicate* to the proletariat the organisational work which *can* solve this historically important problem.

This brings us to another aspect of the question of the state apparatus. In addition to the chiefly "oppressive" apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy—the modern state possesses an apparatus which has extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates, an apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work, if it may be expressed this way. This apparatus must not, and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off, lopped off, chopped away from* this apparatus; it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide. And this *can* be done by utilising the achievements already made by large-scale capitalism (in the same way as the proletarian revolution can, in general, reach its goal only by utilising these achievements).

Capitalism has created an accounting *apparatus* in the shape of the banks, syndicates, postal service, consumers' societies, and office employees' unions. *Without big banks socialism would be impossible.*

The big banks *are* the "state apparatus" which we *need* to bring about socialism, and which we *take ready-made* from capitalism; our task here is merely to *lop off* what *capitalistically mutilates* this excellent apparatus, to make it *even bigger*, even more democratic, even more comprehensive. Quantity will be transformed into quality. A single State Bank, the biggest of the big, with branches in every rural district, in every factory, will constitute as much as nine-tenths of the *socialist* apparatus. This will be country-wide *book-keeping*, country-wide *accounting* of the production and distribution of goods, this will be, so to speak, something in the nature of the *skeleton* of socialist society.

We can "lay hold of" and "set in motion" this "state apparatus" (which is not fully a state apparatus under capitalism, but which will be so with us, under socialism) at one stroke, by a single decree, because the actual work of book-keeping, control, registering, accounting and counting is performed by *employees*, the majority of whom themselves lead a proletarian or semi-proletarian existence.

By a single decree of the proletarian government these employees can and must be transferred to the status of state employees,

in the same way as the watchdogs of capitalism like Briand and other bourgeois ministers, by a single decree, transfer railwaymen on strike to the status of state employees. We shall need many more state employees of this kind, and more *can* be obtained, because capitalism has simplified the work of accounting and control, has reduced it to a comparatively simple system of *book-keeping*, which any literate person can do.

The conversion of the bank, syndicate, commercial, etc., etc., rank-and-file employees into state employees is quite feasible both technically (thanks to the preliminary work performed for us by capitalism, including finance capitalism) and politically, provided the *Soviets* exercise control and supervision.

As for the higher officials, of whom there are very few, but who gravitate towards the capitalists, they will have to be dealt with in the same way as the capitalists, i.e., "severely". Like the capitalists, they will offer *resistance*. This resistance will have to be *broken*, and if the immortally-naïve Peshekhonov, as early as June 1917, lisped like the infant that he was in state affairs, that "the resistance of the capitalists has been broken", this childish phrase, this childish boast, this childish swagger, *will be converted by the proletariat into reality*.

We can do this, for it is merely a question of breaking the resistance of an insignificant minority of the population, literally a handful of people, over each of whom the employees' unions, the trade unions, the consumers' societies and the Soviets will institute such *supervision* that every Tit Titych will be *surrounded* as the French were at Sedan.<sup>193</sup> We know these Tit Tityches by name: we only have to consult the lists of directors, board members, large shareholders, etc. There are several hundred, at most several thousand of them in the *whole* of Russia, and the proletarian state, with the apparatus of the Soviets, of the employees' unions, etc., will be able to appoint ten or even a hundred supervisors to each of them, so that instead of "breaking resistance" it may even be possible, by means of *workers' control* (over the capitalists), to make all resistance *impossible*.

The important thing will not be even the confiscation of the capitalists' property, but country-wide, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. Confiscation alone leads nowhere, as it does not contain the element of organisation, of accounting for proper distribution. Instead of confiscation, we could easily impose a *fair* tax (even on the Shingaryov scale, for instance), taking care, of course, to preclude the possibility of anyone evading assessment, concealing the truth, evading the law. And this possibility can be *eliminated only* by the workers' control of the *workers' state*.



*Compulsory syndication*, i.e., compulsory amalgamation in associations under state control—this is what capitalism has prepared the way for, this is what has been carried out in Germany by the Junkers' state, this is what can be easily carried out in Russia by the Soviets, by the proletarian dictatorship, and this is what will *provide us with a state apparatus* that will be universal, up-to-date, and non-bureaucratic.\*

\* \* \*

The fourth plea of the counsels for the bourgeoisie is that the proletariat will not be able "to set the state apparatus in motion". There is nothing new in this plea compared with the preceding one. We could not, of course, either lay hold of or set in motion the old apparatus. The new apparatus, the Soviets, *has already* been set in motion by "a mighty burst of creative enthusiasm that stems from the people themselves". We only have to free it from the *shackles* put on it by the domination of the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders. This apparatus *is already* in motion; we only have to free it from the monstrous, petty-bourgeois impediments preventing it from going full speed ahead.

Two circumstances must be considered here to supplement what has already been said. In the first place, the new means of control have been created *not* by us, but by capitalism in its military-imperialist stage; and in the second place, it is important to introduce more democracy into the *administration* of a proletarian state.

The grain monopoly and bread rationing were introduced not by us, but by the capitalist state in war-time. It had already introduced universal labour conscription within the framework of capitalism, which is war-time penal servitude for the workers. But here too, as in all its history-making activities, the proletariat takes its weapons from capitalism and does not "invent" or "create them out of nothing".

The grain monopoly, bread rationing and labour conscription in the hands of the proletarian state, in the hands of sovereign Soviets, will be the most powerful means of accounting and control, means which, applied to the capitalists, and to *the rich in general*, applied to them by the *workers*, will provide a force unprecedented in history for "setting the state apparatus in motion", for overcoming the resistance of the capitalists, for subordinating them to the proletarian state. These means of

---

\* For further details of the meaning of compulsory syndication see my pamphlet: *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*. (See pp. 199-201 of the present volume.—Ed.)

control and of *compelling people to work* will be more potent than the laws of the Convention and its guillotine. The guillotine *only* terrorised, only broke *active* resistance. *For us, this is not enough.*

For us, this is not enough. We must not only "terrorise" the capitalists, i.e., make them feel the omnipotence of the proletarian state and give up all idea of actively resisting it. We must also break *passive* resistance, which is undoubtedly more dangerous and harmful. We must not only break resistance of every kind. We must also *compel the capitalists to work* within the framework of the new state organisation. It is not enough to "remove" the capitalists; we must (after removing the undesirable and incorrigible "resisters") employ them *in the service of the new state*. This applies both to the capitalists and to the upper section of the bourgeois intellectuals, office employees, etc.

And we have the means to do this. The means and instruments for this have been placed in our hands by the capitalist state in the war. These means are the grain monopoly, bread rationing and labour conscription. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—this is the fundamental, the first and most important rule the Soviets of Workers' Deputies can and will introduce when they become the ruling power.

Every worker has a work-book. This book does not degrade him, although *at present* it is undoubtedly a document of capitalist wage-slavery, certifying that the workman belongs to some parasite.

The Soviets will introduce work-books *for the rich* and then gradually for the whole population (in a peasant country work-books will probably not be needed for a long time for the overwhelming majority of the peasants). The work-book will cease to be the badge of the "common herd", a document of the "lower" orders, a certificate of wage-slavery. It will become a document certifying that in the new society there are no longer any "workmen", nor, on the other hand, are there any longer men *who do not work*.

The rich will be obliged to get a work-book from the workers' or office employees' union with which their occupation is most closely connected, and every week, or other definite fixed period, they will have to get from that union a certificate to the effect that they are performing their work conscientiously; without this they will not be able to receive bread ration cards or provisions in general. The proletarian state will say: we need good organisers of banking and the amalgamation of enterprises (in this matter the capitalists have more experience, and it is easier to work with experienced people), and we need far, far more engineers, agronomists, technicians and scientifically trained

specialists of every kind than were needed before. We shall give all these specialists work to which they are accustomed and which they can cope with; in all probability we shall introduce complete wage equality only gradually and shall pay these specialists higher salaries during the transition period. We shall place them, however, under comprehensive workers' control and we shall achieve the complete and absolute operation of the rule "He who does not work, neither shall he eat". We shall not invent the organisational form of the work, but take it ready-made from capitalism—we shall take over the banks, syndicates, the best factories, experimental stations, academies, and so forth; all that we shall have to do is to borrow the best models furnished by the advanced countries.

Of course, we shall not in the least descend to a utopia, we are not deserting the soil of most sober, practical reason when we say that the entire capitalist class will offer the most stubborn resistance, but this resistance will be broken by the organisation of the entire population in Soviets. Those capitalists who are exceptionally stubborn and recalcitrant will, of course, have to be punished by the confiscation of their whole property and by imprisonment. On the other hand, however, the victory of the proletariat will bring about *an increase* in the number of cases of the kind that I read about in today's *Izvestia* for example:

"On September 26, two engineers came to the Central Council of Factory Committees to report that a group of engineers had decided to form a union of socialist engineers. The Union believes that the present time is actually the beginning of the social revolution and places itself at the disposal of the working people, desiring, in defence of the workers' interests, to work in complete unity with the workers' organisations. The representatives of the Central Council of Factory Committees answered that the Council will gladly set up in its organisation . . . Engineers' Section which will embody in its programme the main theses of the First Conference of Factory Committees on workers' control over production. A joint meeting of delegates of the Central Council of Factory Committees and of the initiative group of socialist engineers will be held within the next few days." (*Izvestia*, September 27, 1917.)

\* \* \*

The proletariat, we are told, will not be able to set the state apparatus in motion.

Since the 1905 revolution, Russia has been governed by 130,000 landowners, who have perpetrated endless violence against 150,000,000 people, heaped unconstrained abuse upon them, and condemned the vast majority to inhuman toil and semi-starvation.

Yet we are told that the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party will not be able to govern Russia, govern her in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 are already

backed by no less than a million votes of the adult population, for this is precisely the proportion between the number of Party members and the number of votes cast for the Party that has been established by the experience of Europe and the experience of Russia as shown, for example, by the elections to the Petrograd City Council last August. We therefore already have a "state apparatus" of *one million* people devoted to the socialist state for the sake of high ideals and not for the sake of a fat sum received on the 20th of every month.

In addition to that we have a "magic way" to enlarge our state apparatus *tenfold* at once, at one stroke, a way which no capitalist state ever possessed or could possess. This magic way is to draw the working people, to draw the poor, into the daily work of state administration.

To explain how easy it will be to employ this magic way and how faultlessly it will operate, let us take the simplest and most striking example possible.

The state is to forcibly evict a certain family from a flat and move another in. This often happens in the capitalist state, and it will also happen in our proletarian or socialist state.

The capitalist state evicts a working-class family which has lost its breadwinner and cannot pay the rent. The bailiff appears with police, or militia, a whole squad of them. To effect an eviction in a working-class district a whole detachment of Cossacks is required. Why? Because the bailiff and the militiaman refuse to go without a very strong military guard. They know that the scene of an eviction arouses such fury among the neighbours, among thousands and thousands of people who have been driven to the verge of desperation, arouses such hatred towards the capitalists and the capitalist state, that the bailiff and the squad of militiamen run the risk of being torn to pieces at any minute. Large military forces are required, several regiments must be brought into a big city, and the troops must come from some distant, outlying region so that the soldiers will not be familiar with the life of the urban poor, so that the soldiers will not be "infected" with socialism.

The proletarian state has to forcibly move a very poor family into a rich man's flat. Let us suppose that our squad of workers' militia is fifteen strong; two sailors, two soldiers, two class-conscious workers (of whom, let us suppose, only one is a member of our Party, or a sympathiser), one intellectual, and eight from the poor working people, of whom at least five must be women, domestic servants, unskilled labourers, and so forth. The squad arrives at the rich man's flat, inspects it and finds that it consists of five rooms occupied by two men and two women.—"You must squeeze up a bit into two rooms this winter, citizens, and pre-

pare two rooms for two families now living in cellars. Until the time, with the aid of engineers (you are an engineer, aren't you?), we have built good dwellings for everybody, you will have to squeeze up a little. Your telephone will serve ten families. This will save a hundred hours of work wasted on shopping, and so forth. Now in your family there are two unemployed persons who can perform light work: a citizeness fifty-five years of age and a citizen fourteen years of age. They will be on duty for three hours a day supervising the proper distribution of provisions for ten families and keeping the necessary account of this. The student citizen in our squad will now write out this state order in two copies and you will be kind enough to give us a signed declaration that you will faithfully carry it out."

This, in my opinion, can illustrate how the distinction between the old bourgeois and the new socialist state apparatus and state administration could be illustrated.

We are not utopians. We know that an unskilled labourer or a cook cannot immediately get on with the job of state administration. In this we agree with the Cadets, with Breshkovskaya, and with Tsereteli. We differ, however, from these citizens in that we demand an immediate break with the prejudiced view that only the rich, or officials chosen from rich families, are capable of *administering* the state, of performing the ordinary, everyday work of administration. We demand that *training* in the work of state administration be conducted by class-conscious workers and soldiers and that this training be begun at once, i.e., that a *beginning* be made at once in training all the working people, all the poor, for this work.

We know that the Cadets are also willing to teach the people democracy. Cadet ladies are willing to deliver lectures to domestic servants on equal rights for women in accordance with the best English and French sources. And also, at the very next concert-meeting, before an audience of thousands, an exchange of kisses will be arranged on the platform: the Cadet lady lecturer will kiss Breshkovskaya, Breshkovskaya will kiss ex-Minister Tsereteli, and the grateful people will therefore receive an object-lesson in republican equality, liberty and fraternity. . . .

Yes, we agree that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya and Tsereteli are in their own way devoted to democracy and are propagating it among the people. But what is to be done if our conception of democracy is somewhat different from theirs?

In our opinion, to ease the incredible burdens and miseries of the war and also to heal the terrible wounds the war has inflicted on the people, *revolutionary* democracy is needed, *revolutionary* measures of the kind described in the example of the distribution of housing accommodation in the interests of the poor.

*Exactly the same* procedure must be adopted in both town and country for the distribution of provisions, clothing, footwear, etc., in respect of the land in the rural districts, and so forth. For the administration of the state in *this* spirit we can *at once set in motion a state apparatus* consisting of ten if not twenty million people, an apparatus such as no capitalist state has ever known. We alone can create such an apparatus, for we are sure of the fullest and devoted sympathy of the vast majority of the population. We alone can create such an apparatus, because we have class-conscious workers disciplined by long capitalist "schooling" (it was not for nothing that we went to learn in the school of capitalism), workers who are *capable* of forming a workers' militia and of *gradually* expanding it (beginning to expand it at once) into a militia *embracing the whole people*. The class-conscious workers must lead, but for the work of administration they can enlist the vast mass of the working and oppressed people.

It goes without saying that this new apparatus is bound to make mistakes in taking its first steps. But did not the peasants make mistakes when they emerged from serfdom and began to manage their own affairs? Is there any way other than practice by which the people can learn to govern themselves and to avoid mistakes? Is there any way other than by proceeding immediately to genuine self-government by the people? The chief thing now is to abandon the prejudiced bourgeois-intellectualist view that only special officials, who by their very social position are entirely dependent upon capital, can administer the state. The chief thing is to put an end to the state of affairs in which bourgeois officials and "socialist" ministers are trying to govern in the old way, but are incapable of doing so and, after seven months, are faced with a peasant revolt in a peasant country! The chief thing is to imbue the oppressed and the working people with confidence in their own strength, to prove to them in practice that they can and must themselves ensure the *proper*, most strictly regulated and organised distribution of bread, all kinds of food, milk, clothing, housing, etc., *in the interests of the poor*. Unless this is done, Russia *cannot* be saved from collapse and ruin. The conscientious, bold, universal move to hand over administrative work to proletarians and semi-proletarians will, however, rouse such unprecedented revolutionary enthusiasm among the people, will so multiply the people's forces in combating distress, that much that seemed impossible to our narrow, old, bureaucratic forces will become possible for the millions, who will *begin to work for themselves* and not for the capitalists, the gentry, the bureaucrats, and not out of fear of punishment.

Pertinent to the question of the state apparatus is also the question of centralism raised with unusual vehemence and ineptitude by Comrade Bazarov in *Novaya Zhizn* No. 138, of September 27, in an article entitled: "The Bolsheviks and the Problem of Power".

Comrade Bazarov reasons as follows: "The Soviets are not an apparatus suitable for all spheres of state life", for, he says, seven months' experience has shown, and "scores and hundreds of documents in the possession of the Economic Department of the St. Petersburg Executive Committee" have confirmed, that the Soviets, although actually enjoying "full power" in many places, "have not been able to achieve anything like satisfactory results in combating economic ruin". What is needed is an apparatus "divided up according to branches of production, with strict centralisation within each branch, and subordinated to one, country-wide centre". "It is a matter," if you please, "not of replacing the old apparatus, but merely of reforming it . . . no matter how much the Bolsheviks may jeer at people with a plan. . . ."

All these arguments of Comrade Bazarov's are positively amazing for their helplessness, they echo the arguments of the bourgeoisie and reflect their class point of view.

In fact, to say that the Soviets have anywhere in Russia ever enjoyed "full power" is simply ridiculous (if it is not a repetition of the selfish class lie of the capitalists). Full power means power over all the land, over all the banks, over all the factories; a man who is at all familiar with the facts of history and science on the connection between politics and economics could not have "forgotten" this "trifling" circumstance.

The bourgeoisie's device is to *withhold* power from the Soviets, *sabotage* every important step they take, while at the same time retaining government in their own hands, retaining power over the land, the banks, etc., and then throwing the blame for the ruin upon the Soviets! This is exactly what the whole sad experience of the coalition amounts to.

The Soviets have never had full power, and the measures they have taken could not result in anything but palliatives that added to the confusion.

The effort to prove the necessity for centralism to the Bolsheviks who are centralists by conviction, by their programme and by the entire tactics of their Party, is really like forcing an open door. The writers of *Novaya Zhizn* are wasting their time only because they have totally failed to understand the meaning and significance of our jeers at their "country-wide" point of view. And the *Novaya Zhizn* people have failed to understand this because they merely pay *lip-service* to the doctrine of the class

struggle, but do not accept it seriously. Repeating the words about the class struggle they have learned by rote, they are constantly slipping into the "above-class point of view", amusing in theory and reactionary in practice, and are calling this fawning upon the bourgeoisie a "country-wide" plan.

The state, dear people, is a class concept. The state is an organ or instrument of violence exercised by one class against another. So long as it is an instrument of violence exercised by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, the proletariat can have only one slogan: *destruction* of this state. But when the state will be a proletarian state, when it will be an instrument of violence exercised by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, we shall be fully and unreservedly in favour of a strong state power and of centralism.

To put it in more popular language, we do not jeer at "plans", but at Bazarov and Co.'s failure to understand that by repudiating "workers' control", by repudiating the "dictatorship of the proletariat" they *are for* the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There is no middle course; a middle course is the futile dream of the petty-bourgeois democrat.

Not a single central body, not a single Bolshevik has ever argued against *centralisation* of the Soviets, against their amalgamation. None of us objects to having factory committees in each branch of production, or to their centralisation. Bazarov is *wide of the mark*.

We laugh, have laughed, and will laugh not at "centralism", and not at "plans", but at *reformism*, because, after the experience of the coalition, your reformism is utterly ridiculous. And to say "not replace the apparatus but reform it" means to be a reformist, means to become not a revolutionary but a reformist democrat. Reformism means nothing more than concessions on the part of the ruling class, but *not* its overthrow; it makes concessions, but power remains in *its hands*.

This is precisely what has been tried during six months of the coalition.

This is what we laugh at. Having failed to obtain a thorough grasp of the doctrine of the class struggle, Bazarov allows himself to be caught by the bourgeoisie who sing in chorus "Just so, just so, we are by no means opposed to reform, we are in favour of the workers participating in country-wide control, we fully agree with that", and good Bazarov *objectively* sings the descant for the capitalists.

This has always been and always will be the case with people who in the thick of intense class struggle want to take up a "middle" position. And it is because the writers of *Novaya Zhizn* are incapable of understanding the class struggle that their policy



is such a ridiculous and eternal oscillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Get busy on "plans", dear citizens, that is not politics, that is not the class struggle; here you may be of use to the people. You have many economists on your paper. Unite with those engineers and others who are willing to work on problems of regulating production and distribution; devote the centre page of your big "apparatus" (your paper) to a practical study of precise facts on the production and distribution of goods in Russia, on banks, syndicates, etc., etc.—that is how you will be of use to the people; that is how your sitting between two stools will not be particularly harmful; such work on "plans" will earn not the ridicule, but the gratitude of the workers.

When the proletariat is victorious it will do the following, it will set economists, engineers, agronomists, and so forth, to work *under the control* of the workers' organisations on drawing up a "plan", on verifying it, on devising labour-saving methods of centralisation, on devising the simplest, cheapest, most convenient and universal measures and methods of control. For this we shall pay the economists, statisticians and technicians good money . . . but we shall not give them anything to eat if they do not perform this work conscientiously and entirely *in the interests of the working people*.

We are in favour of centralism and of a "plan", but of the centralism and plan of the *proletarian* state, of proletarian regulation of production and distribution in the interests of the poor, the working people, the exploited, *against* the exploiters. We can agree to only one meaning of the term "country-wide", namely, that which breaks the resistance of the capitalists, which gives all power to the majority of the people, i.e., the proletarians and semi-proletarians, the workers and the poor peasants.

\* \* \*

The fifth plea is that the Bolsheviks will not be able to retain power because "the situation is exceptionally complicated" . . .

O wise men! They, perhaps, would be willing to reconcile themselves to revolution if only the "situation" were not "exceptionally complicated".

Such revolutions never occur, and sighs for such a revolution amount to nothing more than the reactionary wails of a bourgeois intellectual. Even if a revolution has started in a situation that seemed to be not very complicated, the development of the revolution itself *always* creates an *exceptionally* complicated situation. A revolution, a real, profound, a "people's" revolution, to use Marx's expression,<sup>194</sup> is the incredibly complicated

and painful process of the death of the old and birth of the new social order, of the mode of life of tens of millions of people. Revolution is a most intense, furious, desperate class struggle and civil war. Not a single great revolution in history has taken place without civil war. And only a "man in a muffler"<sup>195</sup> can think that civil war is conceivable without an "exceptionally complicated situation".

If the situation were not exceptionally complicated there would be no revolution. If you are afraid of wolves don't go into the forest.

There is nothing to discuss in the fifth plea, because there is no economic, political, or any other meaning whatever in it. It contains only the yearning of people who are distressed and frightened by the revolution. To characterise this yearning I shall take the liberty of mentioning two little things from my personal experience.

I had a conversation with a wealthy engineer shortly before the July days. This engineer had once been a revolutionary, had been in the Social-Democratic movement and even a member of the Bolshevik Party. Now he was full of fear and rage at the turbulent and indomitable workers. "If they were at least like the German workers," he said (he is an educated man and has been abroad), "of course, I understand that the social revolution is, in general, inevitable, but here, when the workers' level has been so reduced by the war . . . it is not a revolution, it is an abyss."

He was willing to accept the social revolution if history were to lead to it in the peaceful, calm, smooth and precise manner of a German express train pulling into a station. A sedate conductor would open the carriage door and announce: "Social Revolution Station! *Alle aussteigen!* (All change!)" In that case he would have no objection to changing his position of engineer under the Tit Tityches to that of engineer under the workers' organisations.

That man has seen strikes. He knows what a storm of passion the most ordinary strike arouses even in the most peaceful times. He, of course, understands how many million times more furious this storm must be when the class struggle has aroused *all* the working people of a vast country, when war and exploitation have driven almost to desperation millions of people who for centuries have been tormented by the landowners, for decades have been robbed and downtrodden by the capitalists and the tsar's officials. He understands all this "theoretically", he only pays *lip-service* to this, he is simply terrified by the "exceptionally complicated situation".

After the July days, thanks to the extremely solicitous attention with which the Kerensky government honoured me, I

was obliged to go underground. Of course, it was the workers who sheltered people like us. In a small working-class house in a remote working-class suburb of Petrograd, dinner is being served. The hostess puts bread on the table. The host says: "Look what fine bread. 'They' dare not give us bad bread now. And we had almost given up even thinking that we'd ever get good bread in Petrograd again."

I was amazed at this class appraisal of the July days. My thoughts had been revolving around the political significance of those events, weighing the role they played in the general course of events, analysing the situation that caused this zigzag in history and the situation it would create, and how we ought to change our slogans and alter our Party apparatus to adapt it to the changed situation. As for bread, I, who had not known want, did not give it a thought. I took bread for granted, as a by-product of the writer's work, as it were. The mind approaches the foundation of everything, the class struggle for bread, through political analysis that follows an extremely complicated and devious path.

This member of the oppressed class, however, even though one of the well-paid and quite intelligent workers, takes the bull by the horns with that astonishing simplicity and straightforwardness, with that firm determination and amazing clarity of outlook from which we intellectuals are as remote as the stars in the sky. The whole world is divided into two camps: "us", the working people, and "them", the exploiters. Not a shadow of embarrassment over what had taken place; it was just one of the battles in the long struggle between labour and capital. When you fell trees, chips fly.

"What a painful thing is this 'exceptionally complicated situation' created by the revolution," that's how the bourgeois intellectual thinks and feels.

"We squeezed 'them' a bit; 'they' won't dare to lord it over us as they did before. We'll squeeze again—and chuck them out altogether," that's how the worker thinks and feels.

\* \* \*

The sixth and last plea: the proletariat "will be incapable of resisting all the pressure by hostile forces that will sweep away not only the proletarian dictatorship, but the entire revolution into the bargain".

Don't try to scare us, gentlemen, you won't succeed. We saw these hostile forces and their pressure in Kornilovism (from which the Kerensky regime in no way differs). Everybody saw, and the people remember, how the proletariat and the poor peasants

swept away the Kornilov gang, and how pitiful and helpless proved to be the position of the supporters of the bourgeoisie and of the few exceptionally well-to-do local small landowners who were exceptionally "hostile" to the revolution. *Dyelo Naroda* of September 30 urges the workers to "be patient and put up with" Kerensky (i.e., Kornilov) and the fake Tsereteli-Bulygin Duma until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (convened under the protection of "military measures" against insurgent peasants!) and, with great gusto, it repeats precisely *Novaya Zhizn's* sixth plea and shouts until it is hoarse: "The Kerensky government will under no circumstances submit" (to the rule of the Soviets, the rule of the workers and peasants, which *Dyelo Naroda*, not wishing to lag behind the pogrom-mongers and anti-Semites, monarchists and Cadets, calls the rule of "Trotsky and Lenin": these are the lengths to which the Socialist-Revolutionaries go!).

But neither *Novaya Zhizn* nor *Dyelo Naroda* can scare the class-conscious workers. "The Kerensky government," you say, "will under no circumstances submit", i.e., it will repeat the Kornilov revolt, to put it more simply, bluntly and clearly. And the gentlemen of *Dyelo Naroda* dare to say that this will be "civil war", that this is a "horrible prospect"!

No, gentlemen, you will not fool the workers. It will not be civil war but a hopeless revolt of a handful of Kornilovites. If they want to "refuse to submit" to the people and at all costs provoke a repetition on a wide scale of what happened to the Kornilov men in Vyborg—if that is what the Socialist-Revolutionaries *want*, if that is what the member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party Kerensky wants, he may drive the people to desperation. But you will not scare the workers and soldiers with this, gentlemen.

What boundless insolence. They faked up a new Bulygin Duma; by means of fraud they recruited a crowd of reactionary co-operators and village kulaks to help them, added to these the capitalists and landowners (the so-called property-owning classes), and with the aid of this gang of Kornilovites they want to *thwart the will of the people*, the will of the workers and peasants.

They have brought affairs in a peasant country to such a pass that peasant revolt is spreading everywhere like a river in flood! Think of it! In a democratic republic in which 80 per cent of the population are peasants, the peasants have been driven to revolt. . . . This same *Dyelo Naroda*, Chernov's newspaper, the organ of the "Socialist-Revolutionary" Party, which on September 30 has the effrontery to advise the workers and peasants to "be patient", was obliged to admit in a leading article on September 29:

"So far practically nothing has been done to put an end to those relations of bondage that still prevail in the villages of central Russia."

This same *Dyelo Naroda*, in the same leading article of September 29, says that "the dead hand of Stolypin is still making itself strongly felt" in the methods employed by the "revolutionary ministers"; in other words, putting it more clearly and simply, it brands Kerensky, Nikitin, Kishkin and Co. as *Stolypins*.

The "Stolypins" Kerensky and Co. have driven the peasants to revolt, are now taking "military measures" against the peasants, are trying to soothe the people with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (although Kerensky and Tsereteli have already *deceived* the people once by solemnly proclaiming on July 8 that the Constituent Assembly would be convened on the appointed date, September 17; they then *broke their promise* and postponed the Constituent Assembly even against the advice of the *Menshevik Dan*, postponed the Constituent Assembly not to the end of October as the Menshevik Central Executive Committee of that time wished, but to the end of November). The "Stolypins" Kerensky and Co. are trying to soothe the people with the imminent convocation of the Constituent Assembly, as if the people can believe those who have already lied in this matter, as if the people can believe that the Constituent Assembly will be *properly* convened by a government which has taken *military measures* in remote villages, that is to say, is openly *conniving* at the arbitrary arrest of class-conscious peasants and the *rigging* of the elections.

The government has driven the peasants to revolt and now has the effrontery to say to them: "You must 'be patient', you must wait, trust the government: which is pacifying insurgent peasants by 'military measures'!"

To bring matters to such a pitch that hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers perish in the offensive after June 19, the war is being protracted, German sailors have mutinied and are throwing their officers overboard, to bring matters to such a pitch, all the time uttering phrases about peace but *not offering* a just peace to *all* the belligerents, and yet to have the effrontery to tell the workers and peasants, to tell the dying soldiers, "you must be patient", trust the government of the "Stolypin man" Kerensky, trust the Kornilov generals for another month, perhaps in that month they will send several tens of thousands more soldiers to the slaughter.... "You must be patient"....

Isn't that shameless?

But you won't fool the soldiers, gentlemen of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kerensky's fellow party members.

The workers and soldiers will not endure the Kerensky government for a single day, for an *extra* hour, for they know that the Soviet Government will *immediately* offer all the belligerents a just peace and therefore will *in all probability* achieve an immediate armistice and a speedy peace.

Not for a single day, not for an *extra* hour will the soldiers of our peasant army allow the Kerensky government—the government which is employing *military measures* to suppress the peasant revolt—to remain in power against the will of the Soviets.

No, gentlemen of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kerensky's fellow party members, you won't fool the workers and peasants any more.

\* \* \*

On the question of the pressure by hostile forces which the mortally frightened *Novaya Zhizn* assures us will sweep away the proletarian dictatorship, still another monstrous logical and political mistake is made, which only people who have allowed themselves to be frightened out of their wits can fail to see.

"Pressure by hostile forces will sweep away the proletarian dictatorship," you say. Very well. But you are all economists and educated people, dear fellow-citizens. You all know that to contrast democracy to the bourgeoisie is senseless and a sign of ignorance; it is the same as contrasting pounds to yards, for there is a democratic bourgeoisie and undemocratic groups of the petty bourgeoisie (capable of raising a Vendée).

"Hostile forces" is merely an empty phrase. The class term is *bourgeoisie* (backed by the landowners).

The bourgeoisie and the landowners, the proletariat, and the petty bourgeoisie, the small proprietors, primarily the peasants—these are the three main "forces" into which Russia, like *every* capitalist country, is divided. These are the three main "forces" that have long been revealed in every capitalist country (including Russia) not only by scientific economic analysis, but also by the *political experience* of the modern history of *all* countries, by the experience of *all* European revolutions since the eighteenth century, by the experience of the *two* Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

So, you threaten the proletariat with the prospect that its rule will be swept away by the pressure of the bourgeoisie? That, and that alone, is what your threat amounts to, it has no other meaning.

Very well. If, for example, the bourgeoisie can sweep away the rule of the workers and poor peasants, then the only alternative is a "coalition", i.e., an alliance, or agreement, between the

petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Nothing else can be contemplated!

But coalition has been tried for about six months and it has led to bankruptcy, and you yourselves, my dear but dense citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, have *renounced* coalition.

So what do we get?

You have become so muddled, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, you have allowed yourselves to be so scared, that you cannot think straight in the extremely simple matter of *counting even up to three, let alone up to five*.

Either all power to the bourgeoisie—the slogan you have long ceased to advocate, and which the bourgeoisie themselves dare not even hint at, for they know that the people overthrew this power with one hitch of the shoulder at the time of the April 20-21 events, and would overthrow it now with thrice that determination and ruthlessness; or power to the petty bourgeoisie, i.e., a coalition (alliance, agreement) between them and the bourgeoisie, for the petty bourgeoisie do not wish to and *cannot* take power alone and independently, as has been proved by the experience of all revolutions, and as is proved by economics, which explains that in a capitalist country it is possible to stand for capital and it is possible to stand for labour, but it is impossible to stand for long in between. In Russia this coalition has for six months tried scores of ways and failed.

Or, finally, all power to the proletarians and the poor peasants against the bourgeoisie in order to break their resistance. This has not yet been tried, and you, gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn*, are *dissuading* the people from this, you are trying to frighten them with your own fear of the bourgeoisie.

No fourth way can be invented.

If *Novaya Zhizn*, therefore, is afraid of the proletarian dictatorship and rejects it because, as it claims, the proletarian power may be defeated by the bourgeoisie, it is tantamount to its *sur-reptitiously reverting* to the position of *compromise* with the capitalists! It is as clear as daylight that whoever is afraid of resistance, whoever does not believe that it is possible to break this resistance, whoever warns the people: "beware of the resistance of the capitalists, you will not be able to cope with it", is *thereby* again calling for compromise with the capitalists.

*Novaya Zhizn* is hopelessly and pitifully muddled, as are all the petty-bourgeois democrats who now realise that the coalition is bankrupt, dare not defend it openly and, at the same time, protected by the bourgeoisie, fear the transfer of all power to the proletarians and poor peasants.

To fear the resistance of the capitalists and yet to call oneself a revolutionary, to wish to be regarded as a socialist—isn't that disgraceful? How low must international socialism, corrupted by opportunism, have fallen ideologically if such voices *could* be raised?

We have already seen the strength of the capitalists' resistance; the entire people have seen it, for the capitalists are more class-conscious than the other classes and at once realised the significance of the Soviets, at once exerted *all their efforts* to the utmost, resorted to everything, went to all lengths, resorted to the most incredible lies and slander, to military plots *in order to frustrate the Soviets*, to reduce them to nought, to prostitute them (with the aid of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), to transform them into talking-shops, to wear down the peasants and workers by months and months of empty talk and playing at revolution.

*We have not yet seen*, however, the strength of resistance of the proletarians and poor peasants, for this strength will become fully apparent only when power is in the hands of the proletariat, when tens of millions of people who have been crushed by want and capitalist slavery see from experience and *feel* that state power has passed into the hands of the oppressed classes, that the state is helping the poor to fight the landowners and capitalists, is *breaking* their resistance. *Only* then shall we see what untapped forces of resistance to the capitalists are latent among the people; only then will what Engels called "latent socialism"<sup>196</sup> manifest itself. Only then, for every *ten thousand* overt and concealed enemies of working-class rule, manifesting themselves actively or by passive resistance, there will arise *a million* new fighters who had been politically dormant, writhing in the torments of poverty and despair, having ceased to believe that they were human, that they had the right to live, that they too could be served by the entire might of the modern centralised state, that contingents of the proletarian militia could, with the fullest confidence, also call upon *them* to take a direct, immediate, daily part in state administration.

The capitalists and landowners, with the kind help of Plekhanov, Breshkovskaya, Tsereteli, Chernov and Co., have done *everything* in their power to *defile* the democratic republic, to defile it by servility to wealth to such a degree that the people are being overcome by apathy, indifference; *it is all the same to them*, because the hungry man cannot see the difference between the republic and the monarchy; the freezing, barefooted, worn-out soldier sacrificing his life for alien interests is not inclined to love the republic.

But when every labourer, every unemployed worker, every



cook, every ruined peasant sees, not from the newspapers, but with his own eyes, that the proletarian state is not cringing to wealth but is helping the poor, that this state does not hesitate to adopt revolutionary measures, that it confiscates surplus stocks of provisions from the parasites and distributes them to the hungry, that it forcibly installs the homeless in the houses of the rich, that it compels the rich to pay for milk but does not give them a drop until the children of *all* poor families are sufficiently supplied, that the land is being transferred to the working people and the factories and banks are being placed under the control of the workers, and that immediate and severe punishment is meted out to the millionaires who conceal their wealth—when the poor see and feel this, no capitalist or kulak forces, no forces of world finance capital which manipulates thousands of millions, will vanquish the people's revolution; on the contrary, *the socialist revolution* will triumph all over the world for it is maturing in all countries.

Our revolution will be invincible if it is not afraid of itself, if it transfers all power to the proletariat, for behind us stand the immeasurably larger, more developed, more organised world forces of the proletariat which are temporarily held down by the war but not destroyed; on the contrary, the war has multiplied them.

\* \* \*

How can one be afraid that the Bolshevik government, that is to say, the proletarian government, which is assured of the devoted support of the poor peasants, will be "swept away" by the capitalist gentlemen! What short-sightedness! What disgraceful fear of the people! What hypocrisy! Those who show this fear belong to that "high" (by capitalist standards, but actually *rotten*) "society" which utters the word "justice" without believing in it, from habit, as a trite phrase, attaching no meaning to it.

Here is an example.

Mr. Peshekhonov is a well-known semi-Cadet. A more moderate Trudovik, one of the same mind as the Breshkovskayas and Plekhanovs, will not be found. There has never been a minister more servile to the bourgeoisie. The world has never seen a more ardent advocate of "coalition", of compromise with the capitalists.

Here are the admissions this gentleman was *forced* to make in his speech at the "Democratic" (read: Bulygin) Conference as reported by the defencist *Izvestia*:

"There are two programmes. One is the programme of group claims, class and national claims. This programme is most frankly advocated by the Bolsheviks. It is not easy, however, for the other sections of the democracy to reject this programme. They are the claims of the working people, the claims

of the cheated and oppressed nationalities. It is not so easy, therefore, for the democracy to break with the Bolsheviks, to reject these class demands, primarily because in essence these demands are just. But this programme, for which we fought before the revolution, for the sake of which we made the revolution, and which we would all unanimously support under other circumstances, constitutes a very grave danger under present conditions. The danger is all the greater now because these demands have to be presented at a time when it is impossible for the state to comply with them. We must first defend the whole—the state, to save it from doom, and there is only one way to do that; not the satisfaction of demands, however just and cogent they may be, but, on the contrary, restriction and sacrifice, which must be contributed from all quarters." (*Izvestia*, September 17.)

Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that as long as the capitalists are in power he is defending *not* the whole, but the selfish interests of Russian and "Allied" imperialist capital. Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that the war would cease to be an imperialist, predatory war of annexation only after a rupture with the capitalists, with *their* secret treaties, with *their* annexations (seizure of alien territory), with *their* banking and financial swindles. Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that only *after* this would the war become—if the enemy rejected the formal offer of a just peace—a defensive war, a just war. Mr. Peshekhonov fails to understand that the defence potential of a country that has thrown off the yoke of capital, that has given the peasants land and has placed the banks and factories under workers' control, would be *many times* greater than the defence potential of a capitalist country.

The main thing that Mr. Peshekhonov *fails* to understand is that he *surrenders* his entire position, the entire position of the entire petty-bourgeois democracy, when he is forced to admit the justice of Bolshevism, to admit that its demands are the demands of the "*working people*", i.e., of the majority of the people.

This is where our strength lies. This is why our government will be invincible; because even our opponents are forced to admit that the Bolshevik programme is that of the "*working people*" and the "*oppressed nationalities*".

After all, Mr. Peshekhonov is the political friend of the Cadets, of the *Yedinstvo* and *Dyelo Naroda* people, of the Breshkovskayas and Plekhanovs, he is the representative of the kulaks and of the gentlemen whose wives and sisters would come tomorrow to gouge out with their umbrellas the eyes of wounded Bolsheviks if they were to be defeated by Kornilov's or (which is the same thing) Kerensky's troops.

A gentleman like that is *forced* to admit the "justice" of the Bolshevik demands.

For him "justice" is merely an empty phrase. For the mass of semi-proletarians, however, and for the majority of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie who have been ruined, tortured and

worn out by the war, it is not an empty phrase, but a most acute, most burning and immense question of death from starvation, of a crust of bread. That is why *no* policy can be based on a "coalition", on a "compromise" between the interests of the starving and ruined and the interests of the exploiters. That is why the Bolshevik government is *assured* of the support of the overwhelming majority of *these* people.

Justice is an empty word, say the intellectuals and those rascals who are inclined to proclaim themselves Marxists on the lofty grounds that they have "contemplated the *hind parts*" of economic materialism.

Ideas become a power when they grip the people. And precisely at the present time the Bolsheviks, i.e., the representatives of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, have embodied in their policy the idea that is motivating countless working people all over the world.

Justice alone, the mere anger of the people against exploitation, would never have brought them on to the true path of socialism. But now that, thanks to capitalism, the material apparatus of the big banks, syndicates, railways, and so forth, has grown, now that the immense experience of the advanced countries has accumulated a stock of engineering marvels, the employment of which is being *hindered* by capitalism, now that the class-conscious workers have built up a party of a quarter of a million members to systematically lay hold of this apparatus and set it in motion with the support of all the working and exploited people—now that these conditions *exist*, no power on earth can prevent the Bolsheviks, *if they do not allow themselves to be scared* and if they succeed in taking power, from retaining it until the triumph of the world socialist revolution.

## AFTERWORD

The foregoing lines were already written when the leading article in *Novaya Zhizn* of October 1 produced another gem of stupidity which is all the more dangerous because it professes sympathy with the Bolsheviks and offers most sagacious philistine admonitions "not to allow yourselves to be provoked" (not to allow ourselves to be caught in the trap of screams about provocation, the object of which is to frighten the Bolsheviks and cause them to *refrain* from taking power).

Here is this gem:

"The lessons of movements, like that of July 3-5, on the one hand, and of the Kornilov days, on the other, have shown quite clearly that the democracy, having at its command organs that exercise immense influence among the population, is invincible when it takes a defensive position in civil war, and that it suffers defeat, loses all the middle vacillating groups when it takes the initiative and launches an offensive."

If the Bolsheviks were to yield in any form and in the slightest degree to the philistine stupidity of this argument they would ruin their Party and the revolution.

For the author of this argument, taking it upon himself to talk about civil war (just the subject for a lady with many good points), has distorted *the lessons of history* on this question in an incredibly comical manner.

This is how *these* lessons, the lessons of history on *this* question, were treated by the representative and founder of proletarian revolutionary tactics, Karl Marx:

"Now, insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other art, and is subject to certain procedural rules which, when neglected, will bring about the downfall of the party neglecting them. These rules, logical deductions from the nature of the parties and the circumstances you have to deal with in such a case, are so plain and simple that the brief experience of 1848 made the Germans fairly well acquainted with them. Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to go

the whole way [literally: face the consequences of your game].\* Insurrection is an equation with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline and habitual authority [Marx has in mind the most "difficult" case of insurrection: against the "firmly established" old authority, against the army not yet disintegrated by the influence of the revolution and the vacillation of the government]; unless you bring strong odds against them you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, once you have entered upon the insurrectionary career, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattered, prepare the way for new successes, however small, but prepare daily; keep up the moral superiority which the first successful rising has given to you, rally in this way those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*" (*Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, German edition, 1907, p. 118.)<sup>197</sup>

We have changed all that, the "would-be Marxists" of *Novaya Zhizn* may say about themselves; instead of triple audacity they have two virtues: "We have two, sir: moderation and accuracy."<sup>198</sup> For "us", the experience of world history, the experience of the Great French Revolution, is nothing. The important thing for "us" is the experience of the two movements in 1917, distorted by Molchalin spectacles.

Let us examine this experience without these charming spectacles.

You compare July 3-5 with 'civil war', because you believed Alexinsky, Pereverzev and Co. It is typical of the gentlemen of *Novaya Zhizn* that they believe *such* people (and do absolutely nothing themselves to *collect information* about July 3-5, although they have the huge apparatus of a big daily newspaper at their disposal).

Let us assume for a moment, however, that July 3-5 was not the rudiment of civil war that was kept within the rudimentary stage by the Bolsheviks, but actual civil war. Let us assume this. In that case, then, what does this lesson prove?

First, the Bolsheviks did *not* take the offensive, for it is indisputable that on the night of July 3-4, and ever on July 4, they

\* Interpolations in square brackets (within passages quoted by Lenin) have been introduced by Lenin unless otherwise indicated.—Ed.

would have gained a great deal if they had taken the offensive. Their defensive position was their weakness, if we are to speak of civil war (as *Novaya Zhizn* does, and not of converting a spontaneous outburst into a demonstration of the type of April 20-21, as the *facts* show).

The "lesson" therefore proves that the wise men of *Novaya Zhizn* are *wrong*.

Secondly, if the Bolsheviks did not even set out to start an insurrection on July 3 or 4, if *not a single* Bolshevik *body* even raised such a question, the reason for it lies *beyond* the scope of our controversy with *Novaya Zhizn*. For we are arguing about the *lessons* of "civil war", i.e., of insurrection, and not about the point that obvious lack of a majority to support it restrains the revolutionary party from thinking of insurrection.

Since everybody knows that the Bolsheviks received a majority in the metropolitan Soviets and in the country (over 49 per cent of the Moscow votes) *much later* than July 1917, it again follows that the "lessons" are far, far from what *Novaya Zhizn*, that lady with many good points, would like them to be.

No, no, you had better not meddle with politics, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*!

If the revolutionary party has no majority in the advanced contingents of the revolutionary classes and in the country, insurrection is out of the question. Moreover, insurrection requires: (1) growth of the revolution on a country-wide scale; (2) the complete moral and political bankruptcy of the old government, for example, the "coalition" government; (3) extreme vacillation in the camp of all middle groups, i.e., those who do *not* fully support the government, although they did fully support it yesterday.

Why did *Novaya Zhizn*, when speaking of the "lessons" of July 3-5, fail even to note this very important lesson? Because a political question was not dealt with by politicians but by a circle of intellectuals who had been terrified by the bourgeoisie.

To proceed. Thirdly, the facts show that it was *after* July 3-4 that the *rot* set in among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, precisely because the Tseretelis had *exposed* themselves by their *July* policy, precisely because the mass of the *people* realised that the Bolsheviks were *their own* front-rank fighters and that the "social-bloc" advocates were traitors. *Even before* the Kornilov revolt this *rot* was fully revealed by the Petrograd elections on August 20, which resulted in a victory for the Bolsheviks and the rout of the "social-bloc" advocates (*Dyelo Naroda* recently tried to refute this *by concealing* the returns for *all* parties, but this was both self-deception and deception of its readers; according to the figures published in *Dyen* of August 24,

covering only the city, the Cadets' share of the total vote increased from 22 to 23 per cent, but the absolute number of votes cast for the Cadets dropped 40 per cent; the Bolsheviks' share of the total vote increased from 20 to 33 per cent, while the absolute number of votes cast for the Bolsheviks dropped only 10 per cent; the share of all "middle groups" dropped from 58 to 44 per cent, but the absolute number of votes cast for them dropped 60 per cent!).

That a rot had set in among the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks after the July days and before the Kornilov days is also proved by the growth of the Left wings in both parties, reaching almost 40 per cent: this is "retribution" for the persecution of the Bolsheviks by the Kerenskys.

In spite of the "loss" of a few hundred members, the proletarian party *gained* enormously from July 3-4, for it was precisely during those stern days that the *people* realised and saw its devotion and the *treachery* of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. So, the "lesson" is far, very far from being of the *Novaya Zhizn* sort, it is one entirely different, namely: don't desert the seething masses for the "Molchalins of democracy"; and if you launch an insurrection, go over to the offensive while the enemy forces are scattered, catch the enemy unawares.

Is that not so, gentlemen "would be Marxists" of *Novaya Zhizn*?

Or does "Marxism" mean *not* basing tactics on an exact appraisal of the *objective* situation but senselessly and uncritically lumping together "civil war" and "a Congress of Soviets and the convocation of the Constituent Assembly"?

But this is simply ridiculous, gentlemen, this is a sheer mockery of Marxism and of logic in general!

If there is *nothing* in the *objective* situation that warrants the intensification of the class struggle to the point of "civil war", why did you speak of "civil war" *in connection* with "a Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly"? (For this is the title of the leading article in *Novaya Zhizn* here under discussion.) In that case you should clearly have told the reader and proved to him that there is *no* ground in the objective situation for civil war and that, therefore, peaceful, constitutionally-legal, juridically and parliamentarily "simple" things like a Congress of Soviets and a Constituent Assembly can and should be the cornerstone of tactics. In that case it is *possible* to hold the opinion that such a congress and such an assembly are really capable of *making decisions*.

If, however, the present objective conditions harbour the inevitability or even only the probability of civil war, if you did not "idly" speak about it, but did so clearly seeing, feeling, sens-

ing the existence of a situation of civil war, how could you make a Congress of Soviets or a Constituent Assembly the cornerstone? This is a sheer mockery of the starving and tormented people! Do you think the starving will consent to "wait" two months? Or that the ruin, about the increase of which you yourselves write every day, will consent to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets or for the Constituent Assembly? Or that the German offensive, in the absence of serious steps on our part towards peace (i.e., in the absence of a formal offer of a just peace to all belligerents), will consent to "wait" for the Congress of Soviets or for the Constituent Assembly? Or are you in possession of facts which permit you to conclude that the history of the Russian revolution, which from February 28 to September 30 had proceeded with extraordinary turbulence and unprecedented rapidity, will, from October 1 to November 29,<sup>199</sup> proceed at a super-tranquil, peaceful, legally balanced pace that will preclude upheavals, spurts, military defeats and economic crises? Or will the army at the front, concerning which the *non*-Bolshevik officer Dubasov said officially, in the name of the front, "it will not fight", quietly starve and freeze until the "appointed" date? Or will the peasant revolt cease to be a factor of civil war because you call it "anarchy" and "pogrom", or because Kerensky will send "military" forces *against the peasants*? Or is it possible, *conceivable*, that the government can work calmly, honestly, and *without* deception to convene the Constituent Assembly in a *peasant* country when that same government is *suppressing* the peasant revolt?

Don't laugh at the "confusion in the Smolny Institute".<sup>200</sup> gentlemen! There is no less confusion in your own ranks. You answer the formidable questions of civil war with confused phrases and pitiful constitutional illusions. That is why I say that if the Bolsheviks were to give in to these moods they would ruin both their Party and their revolution.

*N. Lenin*

October 1, 1917

Written at the end of  
September October 1 (14), 1917

Published in October 1917  
in the magazine *Proveshchennye*, No 1 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp 87-136



---

## LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE MOSCOW AND PETROGRAD COMMITTEES AND THE BOLSHEVIK MEMBERS OF THE PETROGRAD AND MOSCOW SOVIETS

Dear Comrades,

Events are prescribing our task so clearly for us that procrastination is becoming positively *criminal*.

The peasant movement is developing. The government is intensifying its severe repressive measures. Sympathy for us is growing in the army (99 per cent of the soldiers' votes were cast for us in Moscow, the army in Finland and the fleet are against the government, and there is Dubasov's evidence about the front in general).

In Germany the beginning of a revolution is obvious, especially since the sailors were shot. The elections in Moscow—47 per cent Bolsheviks—are a tremendous victory. Together with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries we have an *obvious* majority in the country.

The railway and postal employees are in conflict with the government. Instead of calling the Congress for October 20, the Lieberdians are already talking of calling it at the end of October, etc., etc.

Under such circumstances to "wait" would be a crime.

The Bolsheviks have no right to wait for the Congress of Soviets, they must *take power at once*. By so doing they will save the world revolution (for otherwise there is danger of a deal between the imperialists of all countries, who, after the shootings in Germany, will be more accommodating to each other and *will unite against us*), the Russian revolution (otherwise a wave of real anarchy may become stronger *than we are*) and the lives of hundreds of thousands of people at the front.

Delay is criminal. To wait for the Congress of Soviets would be a childish game of formalities, a disgraceful game of formalities, and a betrayal of the revolution.

If power cannot be achieved without insurrection, we must *resort to insurrection at once*. It may very well be that right now power can be achieved without insurrection, for example, if the Moscow Soviet were to take power at once, immediately, and proclaim itself (together with the Petrograd Soviet) the government. Victory in Moscow is guaranteed, and there is no need to fight. Petrograd can wait. The government cannot do anything to save itself; it will surrender.

For, by seizing power and taking over the banks, the factories and *Russkoye Slovo*,<sup>201</sup> the Moscow Soviet would secure a tremendous basis and tremendous strength, it would be able to campaign throughout Russia and raise the issue thus: we shall propose *peace tomorrow* if the Bonapartist Kerensky surrenders (and if he does not, we shall overthrow him). We shall hand over the *land* to the peasants *at once*, we shall make concessions to the railway and postal employees *at once*, and so on.

It is not necessary to "begin" with Petrograd. If Moscow "begins" without any blood being shed, it will certainly be supported by (1) the army at the front by its sympathy, (2) the peasants everywhere and (3) the fleet and the troops in Finland, which will *proceed to Petrograd*.

Even if Kerensky has a corps or two of mounted troops near Petrograd, he will be obliged to surrender. The Petrograd Soviet can wait and campaign for the Moscow Soviet Government. The slogan is: Power to the Soviets, Land to the Peasants, Peace to the Nations, Bread to the Starving!

Victory is certain, and the chances are ten to one that it will be a bloodless victory.

To wait would be a crime to the revolution.

Greetings, *N. Lenin*

Written on October 1 (14) 1917

First published in 1921  
in *N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov) Works*,  
Vol. XIV, Part 2

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 140-41

---

## ADVICE OF AN ONLOOKER

I am writing these lines on October 8 and have little hope that they will reach Petrograd comrades by the 9th. It is possible that they will arrive too late, since the Congress of the Northern Soviets has been fixed for October 10.<sup>202</sup> Nevertheless, I shall try to give my "Advice of an Onlooker" in the event that the probable action of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd and of the whole "region" will take place soon but has not yet taken place.

It is clear that all power must pass to the Soviets. It should be equally indisputable for every Bolshevik that proletarian revolutionary power (or Bolshevik power—which is now one and the same thing) is assured of the utmost sympathy and unreserved support of all the working and exploited people all over the world in general, in the belligerent countries in particular and among the Russian peasants especially. There is no need to dwell on these all too well known and long established truths.

What must be dealt with is something that is probably not quite clear to all comrades, namely, that in practice the transfer of power to the Soviets now means armed uprising. This would seem obvious, but not everyone was or is giving thought to the point. To repudiate armed uprising now would mean to repudiate the key slogan of Bolshevism (All Power to the Soviets) and proletarian revolutionary internationalism in general.

But armed uprising is a *special* form of political struggle, one subject to special laws to which attentive thought must be given. Karl Marx expressed this truth with remarkable clarity when he wrote that "*insurrection is an art quite as much as war*".

Of the principal rules of this art, Marx noted the following:

(1) *Never play with insurrection, but when beginning it realise firmly that you must go all the way.*

(2) *Concentrate a great superiority of forces at the decisive point and at the decisive moment, otherwise the enemy, who has*

the advantage of better preparation and organisation, will destroy the insurgents.

(3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*. "The defensive is the death of every armed rising."

(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

(5) You must strive for *daily* successes, however small (one might say hourly, if it is the case of one town), and at all costs retain "*moral superiority*".

Marx summed up the lessons of all revolutions in respect to armed uprising in the words of "Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace*".<sup>203</sup>

Applied to Russia and to October 1917, this means: a simultaneous offensive on Petrograd, as sudden and as rapid as possible, which must without fail be carried out from within and from without, from the working-class quarters and from Finland, from Revel and from Kronstadt, an offensive of the *entire* navy, the concentration of a *gigantic superiority* of forces over the 15,000 or 20,000 (perhaps more) of our "bourgeois guard" (the officers' schools), our "Vendée troops" (part of the Cossacks), etc.

Our *three* main forces—the fleet, the workers, and the army units—must be so combined as to occupy without fail and to hold *at any cost*: (a) the telephone exchange; (b) the telegraph office; (c) the railway stations; (d) and above all, the bridges.

The *most determined* elements (our "shock forces" and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all important operations, for example:

to encircle and cut off Petrograd; to seize it by a combined attack of the sailors, the workers, and the troops—a task which requires *art and triple audacity*;

to form detachments from the best workers, armed with rifles and bombs, for the purpose of attacking and surrounding the enemy's "centres" (the officers' schools, the telegraph office, the telephone exchange, etc.). Their watchword must be: "*Better die to a man than let the enemy pass!*"

Let us hope that if action is decided on, the leaders will successfully apply the great precepts of Danton and Marx.

The success of both the Russian and the world revolution depends on two or three days' fighting.

Written on October 8 (21), 1917

First published on November 7, 1920  
in *Pravda* No. 250  
Signed *An Onlooker*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 179-81

---

## LETTER TO THE BOLSHEVIK COMRADES ATTENDING THE CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF THE NORTHERN REGION

Comrades,

Our revolution is passing through a highly critical period. This crisis coincides with the great crisis—the growth of the world socialist revolution and the struggle waged against it by world imperialism. A gigantic task is being presented to the responsible leaders of our Party, and failure to perform it will involve the danger of a complete collapse of the internationalist proletarian movement. The situation is such that, in truth, delay would be fatal.

Take a glance at the international situation. The growth of a world revolution is beyond dispute. The outburst of indignation on the part of the Czech workers has been suppressed with incredible ferocity, testifying to the government's extreme fright. Italy too has witnessed a mass outbreak in Turin.<sup>204</sup> Most important, however, is the revolt in the German navy. One can imagine the enormous difficulties of a revolution in a country like Germany, especially under present conditions. It cannot be doubted that the revolt in the German navy is indicative of the great crisis—the growth of the world revolution. While our chauvinists, who are advocating Germany's defeat, demand a revolt of the German workers immediately, we Russian revolutionary internationalists know from the experience of 1905-17 that a more impressive sign of the growth of revolution than a revolt among the troops cannot be imagined.

Just think what our position is now in the eyes of the German revolutionaries. They can say to us: We have only Liebknecht who openly called for a revolution. His voice has been stifled in a convict prison. We have not a single newspaper which openly explains the necessity for a revolution; we have not got freedom

of assembly. We have not a single Soviet of Workers' or Soldiers' Deputies. Our voice barely reaches the real, broad mass of people. Yet we made an attempt at revolt, although our chance was only one in a hundred. But you Russian revolutionary internationalists have behind you a half-year of free agitation, you have a score of newspapers, you have a number of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, you have gained the upper hand in the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow, you have on your side the entire Baltic fleet and all the Russian troops in Finland. And still you do not respond to our call for an uprising, you do not overthrow your imperialist, Kerensky, although the chances are a hundred to one that your uprising will be successful.

Yes, we shall be real traitors to the International if, at such a moment and under such favourable conditions, we respond to this call from the German revolutionaries with ... *mere* resolutions.

Add to this, as we all perfectly well know, that the plotting and conspiracy of the international imperialists against the Russian revolution are rapidly growing. International imperialism is coming closer to the idea of stifling the revolution at all costs, stifling it both by military measures and by a peace made at the expense of Russia. It is this that is making the crisis in the world socialist revolution so acute, and is rendering our delay of the uprising particularly dangerous—I would almost say criminal.

Take, further, Russia's internal situation. The petty-bourgeois compromising parties which expressed the naïve confidence of the masses in Kerensky and in the imperialists in general, are absolutely bankrupt. Their collapse is complete. The vote cast against coalition by the Soviet curia at the Democratic Conference, the vote cast against coalition by a *majority* of the local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies (in spite of their central Soviet, where Avksentyev and other friends of Kerensky's are installed), the elections in Moscow, where the working-class population has the closest ties with the peasants, and where *over 49 per cent* voted for the Bolsheviks (and among the soldiers fourteen thousand out of seventeen thousand)—does this not signify that the confidence of the people in Kerensky and in those who are compromising with Kerensky and Co. has completely collapsed? Can one imagine any way in which the people could say more clearly to the Bolsheviks than they did by this vote, "Lead us, we shall follow you"?

And we, who have thus won the majority of the people over to our side, and who have gained the Soviets in both the capital cities—are we to wait? What for? For Kerensky and his Kornilovite generals to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, and thus

enter directly or indirectly, openly or secretly, into a conspiracy with *both* Buchanan *and* Wilhelm for the purpose of completely stifling the Russian revolution.

By the Moscow vote and by the re-elections to the Soviets, the people have expressed their confidence in us, but that is not all. There are signs of growing apathy and indifference. That is understandable. It implies not the ebb of the revolution, as the Cadets and their henchmen vociferate, but the ebb of confidence in resolutions and elections. In a revolution, the masses demand action, not words from the leading parties, they demand victories in the struggle, not talk. The moment is approaching when the people may conceive the idea that the Bolsheviks are no better than the others, since they were unable *to act* when the people placed confidence in them. . . .

The peasant revolt is spreading over the whole country. It is perfectly clear that the Cadets and their hangers-on are minimising it in every way and are claiming it to be nothing but "riots" and "anarchy". That lie is being refuted because in the revolt centres the land is beginning to be handed over to the peasants. "Riots" and "anarchy" have never led to such splendid political results! The tremendous strength of the peasant revolt is shown by the fact that the compromisers and the Socialist-Revolutionaries of *Dyelo Naroda*, and *even* Breshko-Breshkovskaya, have begun to talk of transferring the land to the peasants in order to check the movement before it has finally engulfed them.

Are we to wait until the Cossack units of the Kornilovite Kerensky (who was recently exposed as a Kornilovite by the Socialist-Revolutionaries themselves) succeed in suppressing this peasant revolt *piecemeal*?

Apparently, many leaders of our Party have failed to note the *specific* meaning of the slogan which we all adopted and which we have repeated endlessly. The slogan is "All Power to the Soviets". There were periods, there were moments during the six months of the revolution, when this slogan did *not* mean insurrection. Perhaps those periods and those moments blinded some of our comrades and led them to forget that now, at least since the middle of September, this slogan for us too has become *equivalent to a call for insurrection*.

There can be no shadow of doubt on this score. *Dyelo Naroda* recently explained this "in a popular way", when it said "Kerensky will under no circumstances submit!" As if he could!

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" is nothing but a call for insurrection. And the blame will be wholly and undoubtedly ours, if we, who for months have been calling upon the people to revolt and repudiate compromise, fail to lead them to revolt

on the eve of the revolution's collapse, after the people have expressed their confidence in us.

The Cadets and compromisers are trying to scare us by citing the example of July 3-5, by pointing to the intensified agitation of the Black Hundreds, and so forth. But if any mistake was made on July 3-5, it was that we did not take power. I do not think we made a mistake then, for at that time we were not yet in a majority. But now it would be a fatal mistake, worse than a mistake. The spread of Black-Hundred agitation is understandable. It is an aggravation of extremes in an atmosphere of a developing proletarian and peasant revolution. But to use this as an argument *against* an uprising is ridiculous, for the impotence of the Black Hundreds, hirelings of the capitalists, *the impotence of the Black Hundreds in the struggle*, does not even require proof. In the struggle they are not worth considering. In the struggle Kornilov and Kerensky can only rely on the Savage Division and the Cossacks. And now demoralisation has set in even among the Cossacks; furthermore, the peasants are threatening them with civil war within their Cossack regions.

I am writing these lines on Sunday, October 8. You will read them not earlier than October 10. I have heard from a comrade who passed through here that people travelling on the Warsaw railway say, "Kerensky is bringing Cossacks to Petrograd!" This is quite probable, and it will be entirely our fault if we do not verify it *most carefully* and do not *make a study* of the strength and distribution of *the Kornilovite troops of the second draft*.

Kerensky has again brought Kornilovite troops into the vicinity of Petrograd in order to prevent state power from passing into the hands of the Soviets, in order to prevent this power from proposing an immediate peace, in order to prevent all the land from being immediately handed over to the peasants, in order to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, and himself escape to Moscow! That is the slogan of the insurrection which we must circulate as widely as possible and which will have a tremendous success.

We must not wait for the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which the Central Executive Committee may delay even until November. We must not delay and permit Kerensky to bring up more Kornilovite troops. Finland, the fleet and Revel are represented at the Congress of Soviets. These can together start an immediate movement on Petrograd against the Kornilovite regiments, a movement of the fleet, artillery, machine-guns and two or three army corps, such as have shown, for instance in Vyborg, the intensity of their hatred for the Kornilovite generals, with whom Kerensky is again in collusion.



It would be a great mistake to refuse to seize the opportunity of immediately smashing the Kornilovite regiments of the second draft on the ground that the Baltic fleet, by moving into Petrograd, would allegedly expose the front to the Germans. The Kornilovite slanderers will say this, as they will tell any lie, but it is unworthy of revolutionaries to allow themselves to be intimidated by lies and slanders. Kerensky will surrender Petrograd to the Germans, that is now as clear as daylight. No assertions to the contrary can destroy our full conviction that this is so, for it follows from the entire course of events and Kerensky's entire policy.

Kerensky and the Kornilovites will surrender Petrograd to the Germans. And it is in order to save Petrograd that Kerensky must be overthrown and power taken by the *Soviets of both capital cities*. These Soviets will immediately propose a peace to all the nations and will thereby fulfil their duty to the German revolutionaries. They will thereby also be taking a decisive step towards frustrating the criminal conspiracies against the Russian revolution, the conspiracies of international imperialism.

Only the immediate movement of troops from Finland, and of the Baltic fleet, Revel and Kronstadt against the Kornilovite forces quartered near Petrograd can save the Russian and the world revolution. Such a movement has a hundred to one chance of leading *within a few days* to the surrender of a part of the Cossack troops, to the utter defeat of the other part, and to the overthrow of Kerensky, for the workers and the soldiers of both capital cities will support such a movement.

In truth, delay would be fatal.

The slogan "All Power to the Soviets" is a slogan of insurrection. Whoever uses this slogan without having grasped this and given thought to it will have only himself to blame. And insurrection must be treated as an *art*. I insisted on this during the Democratic Conference and I insist on it now, because *that* is what Marxism teaches us, and it is what is being taught us by the present situation in Russia and in the world generally.

It is not a question of voting, of attracting the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, of additional provincial Soviets, or of a congress of these Soviets. It is a question of insurrection, which *can* and must be decided by Petrograd, Moscow, Helsingfors, Kronstadt, Vyborg and Revel. It is *in the vicinity of Petrograd* and in Petrograd itself that the insurrection can and must be decided on and effected, as earnestly as possible, with as much preparation as possible, as quickly as possible and as energetically as possible.

The fleet, Kronstadt, Vyborg, and Revel can and must advance on Petrograd; they can and must smash the Kornilovite regiments, rouse both the capital cities, start a mass agitation for a government which will immediately give land to the peasants and immediately make proposals for peace, overthrow Kerensky's government and establish such a government.

Delay would be fatal.

*N. Lenin*

October 8, 1917

First published on November 7, 1925  
in *Pravda* No 255

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 182-87



2/ доверия к нашей партии (вдоб-  
ро в Москве), наконец явное  
подозрение второй кор-  
нетовской (ввод войск  
из Пиджы, подвоз к Пиджу  
каждого, окружение Милана  
кафканит и пр.), — все  
это ставит на очередь дня  
вооруженное восстание.

Приказав так. обр.  
втор. вооруж. восстание канцлер  
и вполн. иерарх, ц. к.  
представителю вет. организа-  
ции и партии руководящих  
этим и с этой точки зр.  
кис. обсерватор и разведка  
вет. практические вопросы  
(состав, состав, состав, со-  
вод. войск из Пиджы, во-  
звращение москвитин и  
миланит и пр.).

---

# **MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**

**OCTOBER 10 (23), 1917**

## **1**

## **REPORT**

### **MINUTES**

Comrade Lenin maintains that a sort of indifference to the question of insurrection has been noticeable since the beginning of September. But this is impermissible if we are issuing the slogan of the seizure of power by the Soviets in all seriousness. It is therefore high time to pay attention to the technical aspect of the question. Apparently a lot of time has already been lost.

Nevertheless the question is an urgent one, and the decisive moment is near.

The international situation is such that we must take the initiative.

What is being done to surrender territory as far as Narva, and to surrender Petrograd, makes it still more imperative for us to take decisive action.

The political situation is also working impressively in this direction. Decisive action on our part on July 3, 4 and 5 would have failed because we did not have the majority behind us. Since then we have made tremendous progress.

Absenteeism and indifference on the part of the masses is due to their being tired of words and resolutions.

We now have the majority behind us. Politically, the situation is fully ripe for taking power.

The agrarian movement is also developing in that direction, for it is obvious that extreme effort would be needed to stem that movement. The slogan of the transfer of all land has become the general slogan of the peasants. The political situation, therefore, is mature. We must speak of the technical aspect. That is the crux of the matter. Nevertheless we, like the defencists, are inclined to regard the systematic preparation of an uprising as something in the nature of a political sin.

It is senseless to wait for the Constituent Assembly that will obviously not be on our side, for this will only make our task more involved.

The regional congress and the proposal from Minsk<sup>205</sup> must be used for the beginning of decisive action.

First published in the magazine  
*Proletarskaya Revoliutsia* No. 10, 1922

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 188-89

## 2 RESOLUTION

The Central Committee recognises that the international position of the Russian revolution (the revolt in the German navy which is an extreme manifestation of the growth throughout Europe of the world socialist revolution; the threat of peace by the imperialists with the object of strangling the revolution in Russia) as well as the military situation (the indubitable decision of the Russian bourgeoisie and Kerensky and Co. to surrender Petrograd to the Germans), and the fact that the proletarian party has gained a majority in the Soviets—all this, taken in conjunction with the peasant revolt and the swing of popular confidence towards our Party (the elections in Moscow), and, finally, the obvious preparations being made for a second Kornilov revolt (the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the dispatch of Cossacks to Petrograd, the encircling of Minsk by Cossacks, etc.)—all this places the armed uprising on the order of the day.

Considering therefore that an armed uprising is inevitable, and that the time for it is fully ripe, the Central Committee instructs all Party organisations to be guided accordingly, and to discuss and decide all practical questions (the Congress of Soviets of the Northern Region, the withdrawal of troops from Petrograd, the action of our people in Moscow and Minsk, etc.) from this point of view.

First published in the magazine  
*Proletarskaya Revoliutsia* No. 10, 1922

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26  
p. 190

---

# MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

OCTOBER 16 (29), 1917

## 1 REPORT

### MINUTES

Comrade Lenin read the resolution adopted by the Central Committee at the previous meeting. He stated that the resolution had been adopted with two dissenting votes. If the dissident comrades wished to make a statement, a discussion could be held; meanwhile he continued with the motives of the resolution.

If the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties were to break with their policy of conciliation, a compromise with them could be proposed. The proposal had been made, but those parties had obviously rejected the compromise.\* On the other hand, by that time it had become definitely clear that the masses were following the Bolsheviks. That had been before the Kornilov revolt. Lenin cited election returns from Petrograd and Moscow as evidence. The Kornilov revolt had pushed the masses still more decisively to the side of the Bolsheviks. The alignment of forces at the Democratic Conference. The position was clear—either Kornilov's dictatorship or the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorer strata of the peasantry. The Party could not be guided by the temper of the masses because it was changeable and incalculable; the Party must be guided by an objective analysis and an appraisal of the revolution. The masses had put their trust in the Bolsheviks and demanded deeds from them and not words, a decisive policy both in the struggle against the war and in the struggle against economic ruin. If the political analysis of the revolution were taken as the basis, it would be perfectly clear that even anarchic outbursts confirmed that.

Lenin went on to analyse the situation in Europe and showed that revolution would be even more difficult in Europe than in Russia; if matters had gone as far as a revolt in the navy in

\* See pp. 171-75 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

such a country as Germany, there too they must already have gone very far. Certain objective data on the international situation showed that by acting at that moment the Bolsheviki would have all proletarian Europe on their side; he showed that the bourgeoisie wanted to surrender Petrograd. That could only be prevented by the Bolsheviki taking over Petrograd. The obvious conclusion from all this was—the armed uprising was on the order of the day as was stated in the resolution of the Central Committee.

It would be better to draw practical conclusions from the resolution after hearing the reports of representatives from the centres

From a political analysis of the class struggle in Russia and in Europe there emerged the necessity to pursue the most determined and most active policy, which could be only the armed uprising.

## 2 SPEECHES IN DISCUSSION

### MINUTES

#### 1

Comrade Lenin argued against Milyutin and Schotmann and showed that it was not a matter of armed forces, that it was not a question of fighting against the troops but of one part of the army fighting against another. He could see no pessimism in what had been said there. He demonstrated that the forces on the side of the bourgeoisie were small. The facts showed that ours were superior to the enemy. Why could the Central Committee not begin? There was no reason that derived from the facts. To reject the resolution of the Central Committee it would have to be proved that there was no economic ruin and that the international situation would not lead to complications. If trade union leaders were in favour of full power they knew very well what they wanted. Objective conditions showed that the peasantry must be led; they would follow the proletariat.

Some were afraid that Bolsheviki would not be able to maintain power, but at that moment there was a better chance than ever that they would be able to.

Lenin expressed the wish that the debate be confined to the substance of the resolution.

#### 2

If all resolutions were defeated in that manner nothing better could be wished for. Zinoviev was saying: do away with the "Power to the Soviets" slogan and bring pressure to bear on the



government. When it was said that the time was ripe for insurrection there could be no question of conspiracy. Since an insurrection was inevitable politically, it must be regarded as an act. Politically, an insurrection was due.

Because there was only enough bread for a day the Party could not wait for the Constituent Assembly. Comrade Lenin proposed that the resolution be approved, that energetic preparations be begun and that it be left to the Central Committee and the Soviet to decide when.

### 3

Comrade Lenin opposed Zinoviev, saying that the revolution could not be contrasted to the February revolution. He proposed a resolution straight to the point.

### 3

## RESOLUTION

The meeting fully welcomes and fully supports the resolution of the Central Committee and calls upon all organisations and on workers and soldiers to make all-round, energetic preparations for an armed uprising and to support the centre set up for that purpose by the Central Committee; the meeting expresses its complete confidence that the Central Committee and the Soviet will indicate in good time the favourable moment and the most appropriate methods of attack.

---

## LETTER TO BOLSHEVIK PARTY MEMBERS<sup>206</sup>

Comrades,

I have not yet been able to obtain the Petrograd papers for Wednesday, October 18. When the full text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's statement in the non-Party paper *Novaya Zhizn* was transmitted to me by telephone, I refused to believe it. But, as it has turned out, there can be no doubt about it and I have to avail myself of this opportunity to get a letter to Party members by Thursday evening or Friday morning; for to remain silent in the face of such unheard-of *strike-breaking* would be a crime.

The more serious the practical problem, and the more responsible and "prominent" the persons guilty of strike-breaking, the more dangerous it is, the more resolutely must the strike-breakers be kicked out, and the more unpardonable would it be to stop even to consider the past "services" of the strike-breakers.

Just think of it! It has been known in Party circles that the Party has been discussing the question of an insurrection since September. Nobody has ever heard of a single letter or manifesto by either of the persons named! Now, on the eve, one might say, of the Congress of Soviets, two prominent Bolsheviks come out *against* the majority, and, obviously, *against the Central Committee*. It is not said plainly, but the harm done to the cause is all the greater, for to speak in hints is even more dangerous.

It is perfectly clear from the text of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's statement that they have gone against the Central Committee, for otherwise their statement would be meaningless. But they do not say *what* specific decision of the Central Committee they are disputing.

Why?

The reason is obvious: because it has not been published by the Central Committee.

What does this boil down to?

On a burning question of supreme importance, on the eve of the critical day of October 20, two "prominent Bolsheviks" attack an *unpublished* decision of the Party centre and attack it in the *non-Party* press and, furthermore, in a paper which on this very question is *hand in glove with the bourgeoisie against the workers' party!*

This is a thousand times more despicable and a *million times more harmful* than all the statements Plekhanov, for example, made in the non-Party press in 1906-07, and which the Party so sharply condemned! At that time it was only a question of elections, whereas now it is a question of an insurrection for the conquest of power!

On such a question, *after* a decision has been taken by the centre, to dispute this *unpublished* decision in front of the Rodzyankos and Kerenskys in a non-Party paper—can you imagine an act more treacherous or blacklegging any worse?

I should consider it disgraceful on my part if I were to hesitate to condemn these former comrades because of my earlier close relations with them. I declare outright that I no longer consider either of them comrades and that I will fight with all my might, both in the Central Committee and at the Congress, to secure the expulsion of both of them from the Party.

A workers' party, which the course of events is confronting more and more frequently with the need for an insurrection, is unable to accomplish that difficult task if, after their adoption, unpublished decisions of the centre are disputed in the non-Party press and vacillation and confusion are brought into the ranks of the fighters.

Let Mr. Zinoviev and Mr. Kamenev found their own party with the dozens of perplexed people or with candidates for election to the Constituent Assembly. The workers will not join such a party, for its first slogan will be:

"Members of the Central Committee who are defeated at a meeting of the Central Committee on the question of a decisive fight are permitted to resort to the non-Party press for the purpose of attacking the unpublished decisions of the Party."

Let them build themselves *such* a party; our workers' Bolshevik Party will only gain from it.

When all the documents are published, the strike-breaking act of Zinoviev and Kamenev will stand out even more glaringly. Meanwhile, let the workers consider the following question:

"Let us assume that the Executive Committee of an all-Russia trade union had decided, after a month of delibera-

tion and by a majority of over 80 per cent, that preparations must be made for a strike, but that for the time being neither the date nor any other details should be divulged. Let us assume that, *after* the decision had been taken, two members, under the false pretext of a 'dissenting opinion', not only began to write to local groups urging a reconsideration of the decision, but also permitted their letters to be communicated to *non-Party* newspapers. Let us assume, finally, that they themselves attacked the decision in *non-Party* papers, although it had not yet been published, and began to vilify the strike in front of the capitalists.

"We ask, would the workers hesitate to expel such blacklegs from their midst?"

\* \* \*

As to the situation with regard to an insurrection now, when October 20 is so close at hand, I cannot judge from afar to what exact extent the cause has been damaged by the strike-breaking statement in the *non-Party* press. There is no doubt that very great *practical* damage has been done. In order to remedy the situation, it is necessary first of all to restore unity in the Bolshevik front by expelling the blacklegs.

The weakness of the ideological arguments against an insurrection will become clearer, the more we drag them into the light of day. I recently sent an article on this subject to *Rabochy Put*, and if the editors do not find it possible to print it, Party members will probably acquaint themselves with it in the manuscript.<sup>207</sup>

There are basically two so-called "ideological" arguments. First, that it is necessary to "wait" for the Constituent Assembly. Let us wait, perhaps we can hold on until then—that is the whole argument. Perhaps, despite famine, despite economic chaos, despite the fact that the patience of the soldiers is exhausted, despite Rodzyanko's steps to surrender Petrograd to the Germans, despite the lockouts, perhaps we can hold on.

Perhaps and maybe—that is the whole point of the argument.

The second is noisy pessimism. Everything is fine with the bourgeoisie and Kerensky; everything is wrong with us. The capitalists have prepared everything wonderfully; everything is wrong with the workers. The "pessimists" are shouting at the top of their voices about the military side of the matter, but the "optimists" are silent, for to disclose certain things to Rodzyanko and Kerensky is hardly pleasant to anybody but blacklegs.

---

Difficult times. A hard task. A grave betrayal.

Nevertheless, the task will be accomplished; the workers will consolidate their ranks, the peasant revolt and the extreme impatience of the soldiers at the front will do their work! Let us close our ranks—the proletariat must win!

*N. Lenin*

Written on October 18 (31), 1917

First published in *Pravda* No 250,  
November 1, 1927

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 216 19

---

## LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)

Dear Comrades,

No self-respecting party can tolerate strike-breaking and black-legs in its midst. That is obvious. The more we reflect upon Zinoviev's and Kamenev's statement in the non-Party press, the more self-evident it becomes that their action is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. Kamenev's evasion at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet is something really despicable. He is, don't you see, in full agreement with Trotsky. But is it so difficult to understand that in the face of the enemy, Trotsky *could not* have said, he had no right to say, and should not have said more than he did? Is it so difficult to understand that it is a *duty* to the Party which has concealed *its* decision from the enemy (on the necessity for an armed uprising, on the fact that the time for it is fully ripe, on the thorough preparations to be made for it, etc.), and it is this decision that makes it *obligatory* in public statements to fasten not only the "blame", but also the initiative upon the adversary? Only a child could fail to understand that. Kamenev's evasion is a sheer fraud. The same must be said of Zinoviev's evasion, at least of his letter of "justification" (written, I think, to the Central Organ), which is the only document I have seen (for, as to a dissenting opinion, "an alleged dissenting opinion", which has been trumpeted in the *bourgeois* press, I, a member of the Central Committee, have *to this very day* seen nothing of it). Among Zinoviev's "arguments" there is this: Lenin, he says, sent out his letters "*before* any decisions were adopted", and you did not protest. That is literally what Zinoviev wrote, himself underlining the word *before* four times. Is it really so difficult to understand that *before* a decision has been taken on a strike by the centre, it is permissible to agitate for and against it; but that *after* a decision in favour of a strike (with the additional decision to conceal this from the enemy), to carry on agitation against the strike is strike-breaking? Any worker will understand that. The

question of insurrection has been discussed in the centre since September. That is when Zinoviev and Kamenev could and *should* have come out in writing, so that *everybody*, upon seeing their arguments, would have realised that they had completely lost their heads. To conceal one's views from the Party for a whole month *before* a decision is taken, and to send out a dissenting opinion *after* a decision is taken—that is strike-breaking.

Zinoviev pretends not to understand this difference, he pretends not to understand that after a decision to strike has been taken by the centre, only blacklegs can carry on agitation among the lower bodies against that decision. Any worker will understand that.

And Zinoviev did agitate and attempted to defeat the centre's decision, both at Sunday's meeting,<sup>208</sup> where he and Kamenev secured not a single vote, and in his present letter. For Zinoviev has the effrontery to assert that "the opinion of the Party has not been canvassed" and that such questions "cannot be decided by ten men". Just think! Every member of the Central Committee knows that more than ten C.C. members were present at the decisive meeting, that a *majority of the plenary meeting* were present, that Kamenev himself declared at the meeting that "this meeting is decisive", that it was known with absolute certainty that the *majority* of the absent members of the Central Committee *were not in agreement* with Zinoviev and Kamenev. And now, *after* the Central Committee has adopted a decision at a meeting which Kamenev himself admitted to be *decisive*, a member of the Central Committee has the audacity to write that "the opinion of the Party has not been canvassed", and that such questions "cannot be decided by ten men". That is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. Between Party congresses, the Central Committee decides. The Central Committee has decided. Kamenev and Zinoviev, who did not come out in writing *before* the decision was taken, began to *dispute* the Central Committee's decision *after* it had been taken.

That is strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. After a decision has been taken, any dispute is *impermissible* when it concerns immediate and *secret* preparations for a strike. Now Zinoviev has the insolence to blame *us* for "warning the enemy". Is there any limit to his brazenness? Who is it that has damaged the cause, frustrated the strike by "warning the enemy", if not those who came out in the *non-Party* press?

How can one come out *against* a "decisive" resolution of the Party in a paper which on *this* question is hand in glove with the entire bourgeoisie?

If that is tolerated, the Party will become impossible, the Party will be destroyed.

It is ridiculing the Party to give the name of "dissenting opinion" to that which Bazarov learns about and publishes in a non-Party paper.

Kamenev's and Zinoviev's statement in the non-Party press was especially despicable for the additional reason that the Party is not in a position to refute their *slandorous lie* openly. I know of no decisions regarding the date, Kamenev writes and publishes his writings in his own name and in the name of Zinoviev. (After such a statement, Zinoviev bears full responsibility for Kamenev's conduct and statements.)

How can the Central Committee refute this?

We cannot tell the capitalists the truth, namely, that we have *decided* on a strike and have *decided to conceal the moment chosen* for it.

We cannot refute the slanderous lie of Zinoviev and Kamenev *without doing even greater damage to the cause*. And the utter baseness, the real treachery of these two individuals is precisely in their having revealed the strikers' plan to the capitalists, for, since we remain silent in the press, everybody will guess *how* things stand.

Kamenev and Zinoviev have *betrayed* to Rodzyanko and Kerevsky the decision of the Central Committee of their Party on insurrection and the decision to conceal from the enemy preparations for insurrection and the date appointed for it. That is a fact and no evasions can refute it. Two members of the Central Committee have by a slanderous lie *betrayed* the decision of the workers to the capitalists. There can and must be only one answer to that: an immediate decision of the Central Committee:

"The Central Committee, regarding Zinoviev's and Kamenev's statement in the non-Party press as strike-breaking in the full sense of the term, expels both of them from the Party."

It is not easy for me to write in this way about former close comrades. But I should regard any hesitation in this respect as a crime, for otherwise a party of revolutionaries which does not punish prominent blacklegs would *perish*.

The question of insurrection, even if the blacklegs have now delayed it for a long time by betraying it to Rodzyanko and Kerevsky, has not been *removed from the agenda*, it has not been removed by the Party. But how can we prepare ourselves for insurrection and lay plans for it, if we *tolerate* "prominent" strike-breakers in our midst? The more prominent, the *more dangerous* they are, and the less deserving of "forgiveness". *On n'est trahi que par les siens*, the French say. Only your *own people* can betray you.

The more "*prominent*" the strike-breakers are, the more imperative it is to punish them by immediate expulsion.



That is the only way for the workers' party to recuperate, rid itself of a dozen or so spineless intellectuals, rally the ranks of the revolutionaries, and advance to meet great and momentous difficulties hand in hand *with the revolutionary workers*.

We cannot publish the truth, namely, that *after* the decisive meeting of the Central Committee, Zinoviev and Kamenev at Sunday's meeting had the audacity to demand a *revision*, that Kamenev had the effrontery to shout: "The Central Committee has collapsed, for it has done nothing for a whole week" (I could *not* refute that because to say *what really had been done* was impossible), while Zinoviev with an air of innocence proposed this resolution, which was rejected by the meeting: "No action shall be taken before consulting with the Bolsheviks who are to arrive on October 20 for the Congress of Soviets."

Just imagine! After the *centre* has taken a decision to call a strike, it is proposed at a meeting of the rank and file that it be postponed (until October 20, when the Congress was to convene. The Congress was subsequently postponed—the Zinovievs trust the Lieberdants) and be referred to a body *such* as the Party Rules do not provide for, that has *no* authority over the Central Committee, and that does *not* know Petrograd.

And *after this* Zinoviev still has the insolence to write: "This is hardly the way to strengthen the unity of the Party."

What else can you call it but a threat to effect a split?

My answer to this threat is that I shall go the limit, I shall win freedom of speech for myself before the workers, and I shall, *at whatever cost*, brand the blackleg Zinoviev as a blackleg. My answer to the threat of a split is to declare war to a finish, war for the expulsion of both blacklegs from the Party.

The Executive Committee of a trade union, after a *month* of deliberation, decides that a strike is inevitable, that the time is ripe, but that the date is to be concealed from the employers. After that, two members of the Executive Committee appeal *to the rank and file*, disputing the decision, and are defeated. Thereupon these two come out in the press and with a slanderous lie betray the decision of the Executive Committee to the capitalists, thus more than half wrecking the strike, or delaying it to a less favourable time by warning the enemy.

Here we have strike-breaking in the full sense of the term. And that is why I demand the expulsion of both the blacklegs, reserving for myself the right (in view of their threat of a split) to publish *everything* when publication becomes possible.

---

## LETTER TO Y. M. SVERDLOV

To Comrade Sverdlov

I learnt only last night that Zinoviev had issued a *written* denial of his participation in Kamenev's statement in *Novaya Zhizn*.

Why then have you not sent me anything???

I sent all the letters about Kamenev and Zinoviev to C.C. members *only*.—You know this; is it not strange then that you seem to doubt it?

It looks as if I will not be able to attend the Plenary Meeting, because "they are looking for me". If *you* (+ Stalin, Sokolnikov and Dzerzhinsky) demand a compromise on the Zinoviev and Kamenev affair,<sup>209</sup> enter a proposal *against* me, to have the case referred to a Party court (the facts are clear that Zinoviev was also *thwarting* it deliberately); this will be a postponement.

"Kamenev's resignation has been accepted"? From the C.C.? Please let me have the text of his statement.

Cancellation of the Cossacks' demonstration<sup>210</sup> is a great *victory*. Hurrah! If we *attack* with *all our strength*, we shall fully win out in a few days! Best regards! Yours.

Written on October 22 or 23  
(November 4 or 5), 1917

First published in 1957 in the book  
*Oktyabrskoye vooruzhennoye  
vosstaniye v Petrograde* (October  
Armed Uprising in Petrograd)  
Moscow, U.S.S.R. Academy of  
Science Publishers

*Collected Works*, Vol. 41  
pp. 450-51

---

## LETTER TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS<sup>211</sup>

Comrades,

I am writing these lines on the evening of the 24th. The situation is critical in the extreme. In fact it is now absolutely clear that to delay the uprising would be fatal.

With all my might I urge comrades to realise that everything now hangs by a thread; that we are confronted by problems which are not to be solved by conferences or congresses (even congresses of Soviets), but exclusively by peoples, by the masses, by the struggle of the armed people.

The bourgeois onslaught of the Kornilovites and the removal of Verkhovsky show that we must not wait. We must at all costs, this very evening, this very night, arrest the government, having first disarmed the officer cadets (defeating them, if they resist), and so on.

We must not wait! We may lose everything!

The value of the immediate seizure of power will be the defence of the *people* (not of the congress, but of the people, the army and the peasants in the first place) from the Kornilovite government, which has driven out Verkhovsky and has hatched a second Kornilov plot.

Who must take power?

That is not important at present. Let the Revolutionary Military Committee<sup>212</sup> do it, or "some other institution" which will declare that it will relinquish power only to the true representatives of the interests of the people, the interests of the army (the immediate proposal of peace), the interests of the peasants (the land to be taken immediately and private property abolished), the interests of the starving.

All districts, all regiments, all forces must be mobilised at once and must immediately send their delegations to the Revolutionary Military Committee and to the Central Committee of the Bolshe-

vics with the insistent demand that under no circumstances should power be left in the hands of Kerensky and Co. until the 25th—not under any circumstances; the matter must be decided without fail this very evening, or this very night.

History will not forgive revolutionaries for procrastinating when they could be victorious today (and they certainly will be victorious today), while they risk losing much tomorrow, in fact, they risk losing everything.

If we seize power today, we seize it not in opposition to the Soviets but on their behalf.

The seizure of power is the business of the uprising; its political purpose will become clear after the seizure.

It would be a disaster, or sheer formality, to await the wavering vote of October 25. The people have the right and are in duty bound to decide such questions not by a vote, but by force; in critical moments of revolution, the people have the right and are in duty bound to give directions to their representatives, even their best representatives, and not to wait for them.

This is proved by the history of all revolutions; and it would be an infinite crime on the part of the revolutionaries were they to let the chance slip, knowing that the *salvation of the revolution*, the offer of peace, the salvation of Petrograd, salvation from famine, the transfer of the land to the peasants depend upon them.

The government is tottering. It must be *given the deathblow* at all costs.

To delay action is fatal.

Written on October 24 (November 6), 1917

First published in 1924

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 234-35

---

## TO THE CITIZENS OF RUSSIA!

The Provisional Government has been deposed. State power has passed into the hands of the organ of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies—the Revolutionary Military Committee, which heads the Petrograd proletariat and the garrison.

The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers' control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power—this cause has been secured.

Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!

*Revolutionary Military Committee  
of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers'  
and Soldiers' Deputies*

10 a.m., October 25, 1917

---

# **SECOND ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES<sup>213</sup>**

**OCTOBER 25-26 (NOVEMBER 7-8), 1917**

## **1**

### **TO WORKERS, SOLDIERS AND PEASANTS!**

The Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies has opened. The vast majority of the Soviets are represented at the Congress. A number of delegates from the Peasants' Soviets are also present. The mandate of the compromising Central Executive Committee has terminated. Backed by the will of the vast majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants, backed by the victorious uprising of the workers and the garrison which has taken place in Petrograd, the Congress takes power into its own hands.

The Provisional Government has been overthrown. The majority of the members of the Provisional Government have already been arrested.

The Soviet government will propose an immediate democratic peace to all the nations and an immediate armistice on all fronts. It will secure the transfer of the land of the landed proprietors, the crown and the monasteries to the peasant committees without compensation; it will protect the rights of the soldiers by introducing complete democracy in the army; it will establish workers' control over production; it will ensure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly at the time appointed; it will see to it that bread is supplied to the cities and prime necessities to the villages; it will guarantee all the nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination.

The Congress decrees: all power in the localities shall pass to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, which must guarantee genuine revolutionary order.

The Congress calls upon the soldiers in the trenches to be vigilant and firm. The Congress of Soviets is convinced that the revolutionary army will be able to defend the revolution against all attacks of imperialism until such time as the new government succeeds in concluding a democratic peace, which it will propose

directly to all peoples. The new government will do everything to fully supply the revolutionary army by means of a determined policy of requisitions and taxation of the propertied classes, and also will improve the condition of soldiers' families.

The Kornilov men—Kerensky, Kaledin and others—are attempting to bring troops against Petrograd. Several detachments, whom Kerensky had moved by deceiving them, have come over to the side of the insurgent people.

*Soldiers, actively resist Kerensky the Kornilovite! Be on your guard!*

*Railwaymen, hold up all troop trains dispatched by Kerensky against Petrograd!*

*Soldiers, workers in factory and office, the fate of the revolution and the fate of the democratic peace is in your hands!*

*Long live the revolution!*

*The All-Russia Congress of Soviets  
of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*

*The Delegates from the Peasants'  
Soviets*

Written on October 27 (November 7), 1917

## 2 REPORT ON PEACE, OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)

The question of peace : a burning question, the painful question of the day. Much has been said and written on the subject, and all of you, no doubt, have discussed it quite a lot. Permit me, therefore, to proceed to read a declaration which the government you elect should publish.

### DECREE ON PEACE

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, calls upon all the belligerent peoples and their governments to start immediate negotiations for a just, democratic peace.

By a just or democratic peace, for which the overwhelming majority of the working class and other working people of all the belligerent countries, exhausted, tormented and racked by the war, are craving—a peace that has been most definitely and insistently

demand by the Russian workers and peasants ever since the overthrow of the tsarist monarchy—by such a peace the government means an immediate peace without annexations (i.e., without the seizure of foreign lands, without the forcible incorporation of foreign nations) and without indemnities.

The Government of Russia proposes that this kind of peace be immediately concluded by all the belligerent nations, and expresses its readiness to take all the resolute measures now, without the least delay, pending the final ratification of all the terms of such a peace by authoritative assemblies of the people's representatives of all countries and all nations.

In accordance with the sense of justice of democrats in general, and of the working classes in particular, the government conceives the annexation or seizure of foreign lands to mean every incorporation of a small or weak nation into a large or powerful state without the precisely, clearly and voluntarily expressed consent and wish of that nation, irrespective of the time when such forcible incorporation took place, irrespective also of the degree of development or backwardness of the nation forcibly annexed to the given state, or forcibly retained within its borders, and irrespective, finally, of whether this nation is in Europe or in distant, overseas countries.

If any nation whatsoever is forcibly retained within the borders of a given state, if, in spite of its expressed desire—no matter whether expressed in the press, at public meetings, in the decisions of parties, or in protests and uprisings against national oppression—it is not accorded the right to decide the forms of its state existence by a free vote, taken after the complete evacuation of the troops of the incorporating or, generally, of the stronger nation and without the least pressure being brought to bear, such incorporation is annexation, i.e., seizure and violence.

The government considers it the greatest of crimes against humanity to continue this war over the issue of how to divide among the strong and rich nations the weak nationalities they have conquered, and solemnly announces its determination immediately to sign terms of peace to stop this war on the terms indicated, which are equally just for all nationalities without exception.

At the same time the government declares that it does not regard the above-mentioned peace terms as an ultimatum; in other words, it is prepared to consider any other peace terms, and insists only that they be advanced by any of the belligerent countries as speedily as possible, and that in the peace proposals there should be absolute clarity and the complete absence of all ambiguity and secrecy.

The government abolishes secret diplomacy, and, for its part, announces its firm intention to conduct all negotiations quite open-



ly in full view of the whole people. It will proceed immediately with the full publication of the secret treaties endorsed or concluded by the government of landowners and capitalists from February to October 25, 1917. The government proclaims the unconditional and immediate annulment of everything contained in these secret treaties insofar as it is aimed, as is mostly the case, at securing advantages and privileges for the Russian landowners and capitalists and at the retention, or extension, of the annexations made by the Great Russians.

Proposing to the governments and peoples of all countries immediately to begin open negotiations for peace, the government, for its part, expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations in writing, by telegraph, and by negotiations between representatives of the various countries, or at a conference of such representatives. In order to facilitate such negotiations, the government is appointing its plenipotentiary representative to neutral countries.

The government proposes an immediate armistice to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and, for its part, considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for a period of not less than three months, i.e., a period long enough to permit the completion of negotiations for peace with the participation of the representatives of all peoples or nations, without exception, involved in or compelled to take part in the war, and the summoning of authoritative assemblies of the representatives of the peoples of all countries for the final ratification of the peace terms.

While addressing this proposal for peace to the governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia appeals in particular also to the class-conscious workers of the three most advanced nations of mankind and the largest states participating in the present war, namely, Great Britain, France and Germany. The workers of these countries have made the greatest contributions to the cause of progress and socialism; they have furnished the great examples of the Chartist movement in England,<sup>24</sup> a number of revolutions of historic importance effected by the French proletariat, and, finally, the heroic struggle against the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany and the prolonged, persistent and disciplined work of creating mass proletarian organisations in Germany, a work which serves as a model to the workers of the whole world. All these examples of proletarian heroism and historical creative work are a pledge that the workers of the countries mentioned will understand the duty that now faces them of saving mankind from the horrors of war and its consequences, that these workers, by comprehensive, determined, and supremely vigorous action, will

help us to conclude peace successfully, and at the same time emancipate the labouring and exploited masses of our population from all forms of slavery and all forms of exploitation.

---

The workers' and peasants' government, created by the Revolution of October 24-25 and basing itself on the support of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, must start immediate negotiations for peace. Our appeal must be addressed both to the governments and to the peoples. We cannot ignore the governments, for that would delay the possibility of concluding peace, and the people's government dare not do that; but we have no right not to appeal to the peoples at the same time. Everywhere there are differences between the governments and the peoples, and we must therefore help the peoples to intervene in questions of war and peace. We will, of course, insist upon the whole of our programme for a peace without annexations and indemnities. We shall not retreat from it; but we must not give our enemies an opportunity to say that their conditions are different from ours and that therefore it is useless to start negotiations with us. No, we must deprive them of that advantageous position and not present our terms in the form of an ultimatum. Therefore the point is included that we are willing to consider any peace terms and all proposals. We shall consider them, but that does not necessarily mean that we shall accept them. We shall submit them for consideration to the Constituent Assembly which will have the power to decide what concessions can and what cannot be made. We are combating the deception practised by governments which pay lip-service to peace and justice, but in fact wage annexationist and predatory wars. No government will say all it thinks. We, however, are opposed to secret diplomacy and will act openly in full view of the whole people. We do not close our eyes to difficulties and never have done. War cannot be ended by refusal, it cannot be ended by one side. We are proposing an armistice for three months, but shall not reject a shorter period, so that the exhausted army may breathe freely, even if only for a little while; moreover, in all the civilised countries national assemblies must be summoned for the discussion of the terms.

In proposing an immediate armistice, we appeal to the class-conscious workers of the countries that have done so much for the development of the proletarian movement. We appeal to the workers of Britain, where there was the Chartist movement, to the workers of France, who have in repeated uprisings displayed the strength of their class-consciousness, and to the workers of Germany, who waged the fight against the Anti-Socialist Law and have created powerful organisations.

In the Manifesto of March 14,<sup>215</sup> we called for the overthrow of the bankers, but, far from overthrowing our own bankers, we entered into an alliance with them. Now we have overthrown the government of the bankers.

The governments and the bourgeoisie will make every effort to unite their forces and drown the workers' and peasants' revolution in blood. But the three years of war have been a good lesson to the masses—the Soviet movement in other countries and the mutiny in the German navy, which was crushed by the officer cadets of Wilhelm the hangman.<sup>216</sup> Finally, we must remember that we are not living in the depths of Africa, but in Europe, where news can spread quickly.

The workers' movement will triumph and will pave the way to peace and socialism. (*Prolonged applause.*)

### 3

## CONCLUDING SPEECH FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSION ON THE REPORT ON PEACE OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)

I shall not touch on the general character of the declaration. The government which your Congress sets up may amend unessential points.

I shall vigorously oppose lending our demand for peace the form of an ultimatum. An ultimatum may prove fatal to our whole cause. We cannot demand that, since some insignificant departure from our demands on the part of the imperialist governments would give them the opportunity of saying that it was impossible to enter into negotiations for peace because of our irreconcilability.

We shall send out our appeal everywhere, it will be made known to everybody. It will be impossible to conceal the terms proposed by our workers' and peasants' government.

It will be impossible to hush up our workers' and peasants' revolution, which has overthrown the government of bankers and landowners.

The governments may not reply to an ultimatum; they will have to reply to the text as we formulate it. Let everyone know what their governments have in mind. We do not want any secrets. We want a government to be always under the supervision of the public opinion of its country.

What will the peasant of some remote province say if, owing to our insistence on ultimatums, he will not know what another government wants? He will say: Comrades, why did you rule out

the possibility of any peace terms being proposed? I would have discussed them, I would have examined them, and would then have instructed my representatives in the Constituent Assembly how to act. I am prepared to fight by revolutionary methods for just terms if the governments do not agree, but there might be such terms for some countries that I would be prepared to recommend their governments to go on fighting by themselves. The full realisation of our ideas depends solely on the overthrow of the entire capitalist system. This is what the peasant might say to us, and he would accuse us of being excessively uncompromising over trifles, when for us the main thing is to expose all the vileness, all the baseness of the bourgeoisie and of its crowned and uncrowned hangmen at the head of the government.

We should not and must not give the governments an opportunity of taking refuge behind our uncompromising attitude and of concealing from the peoples the reason why they are being sent to the shambles. This is a tiny drop, but we should not and must not reject this drop, which will wear away the stone of bourgeois conquest. An ultimatum would make the position of our opponents easier. But we shall make all the terms known to the people. We shall confront all the governments with our terms and let them give an answer to their people. We shall submit all peace proposals to the Constituent Assembly for decision.

There is still another point, comrades, to which you must pay the most careful attention. The secret treaties must be published. The clauses dealing with annexations and indemnities must be annulled. There are various clauses, comrades—the predatory governments, you know, not only made agreements between themselves on plunder, but among them they also included economic agreements and various other clauses on good-neighbourly relations.

We shall not bind ourselves by treaties. We shall not allow ourselves to be entangled by treaties. We reject all clauses on plunder and violence, but we shall welcome all clauses containing provisions for good-neighbourly relations and all economic agreements; we cannot reject these. We propose an armistice for three months; we choose a lengthy period because the peoples are exhausted, the peoples long for a respite from this bloody shambles that has lasted over three years. We must realise that the peoples should be given an opportunity to discuss the peace terms and to express their will with parliament participating, and this takes time. We demand a lengthy armistice, so that the soldiers in the trenches may enjoy a respite from this nightmare of constant slaughter; but we shall not reject proposals for a shorter armistice; we shall examine them, and it is incumbent upon us to accept them, even if we are offered an armistice of a month or a month

and a half. Nor must our proposal for an armistice have the form of an ultimatum, for we shall not give our enemies an opportunity of concealing the whole truth from the peoples, using our irreconcilability as a pretext. It must not be in the form of an ultimatum, for a government is criminal that does not desire an armistice. If we do not put our proposal for an armistice in the form of an ultimatum, we shall thereby show the peoples that the governments are criminal, and the peoples will not stand on ceremony with such criminals. The objection is raised that by not resorting to an ultimatum we are displaying weakness, but it is time to cast aside all bourgeois cant when speaking of the strength of the people. According to the bourgeois conception, there is strength when the people go blindly to the slaughter in obedience to the imperialist governments. The bourgeoisie admit a state to be strong only when it can, by the power of the government apparatus, hurl the people wherever the bourgeois rulers want them hurled. Our idea of strength is different. Our idea is that a state is strong when the people are politically conscious. It is strong when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously. We need not fear to tell the truth about fatigue, for what state today is not tired, what nation does not talk about it openly? Take Italy, where, owing to this tiredness, there was a prolonged revolutionary movement demanding the termination of the slaughter. Are there not mass demonstrations of workers in Germany that put forward a demand for the termination of the war? Was it not fatigue that provoked the mutiny in the German navy that was so ruthlessly suppressed by that hangman, Wilhelm, and his hirelings? If such things are possible in so disciplined a country as Germany, where they are beginning to talk about fatigue and about putting an end to the war, we need not fear to say the same openly, because it is the truth, equally true both of our country and of all the belligerent and even non-belligerent countries.

#### 4 REPORT ON LAND OCTOBER 26 (NOVEMBER 8)

We maintain that the revolution has proved and demonstrated how important it is that the land question should be put clearly. The outbreak of the armed uprising, the second, October, Revolution, clearly proves that the land must be turned over to the peasants. The government that has been overthrown and the compromising parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries

committed a crime when they kept postponing the settlement of the land question on various pretexts and thereby brought the country to economic chaos and a peasant revolt. Their talk about riots and anarchy in the countryside sounds false, cowardly and deceitful. Where and when have riots and anarchy been provoked by wise measures? If the government had acted wisely, and if their measures had met the needs of the poor peasants, would there have been unrest among the peasant masses? But all the measures of the government, approved by the Avksentyev and Dan Soviets, went counter to the interests of the peasants and compelled them to revolt.

Having provoked the revolt, the government raised a hue and cry about riots and anarchy, for which they themselves were responsible. They were going to crush it by blood and iron, but were themselves swept away by the armed uprising of the revolutionary soldiers, sailors and workers. The first duty of the government of the workers' and peasants' revolution must be to settle the land question, which can pacify and satisfy the vast masses of poor peasants. I shall read to you the clauses of a decree your Soviet Government must issue. In one of the clauses of this decree is embodied the Mandate to the Land Committees, compiled on the basis of 242 mandates from local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

### DECREE ON LAND

(1) Landed proprietorship is abolished forthwith without any compensation.

(2) The landed estates, as also all crown, monastery, and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, buildings and everything pertaining thereto, shall be placed at the disposal of the volost land committees and the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

(3) All damage to confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people, is proclaimed a grave crime to be punished by the revolutionary courts. The uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies shall take all necessary measures to assure the observance of the strictest order during the confiscation of the landed estates, to determine the size of estates, and the particular estates subject to confiscation, to draw up exact inventories of all property confiscated and to protect in the strictest revolutionary way all agricultural enterprises transferred to the people, with all buildings, implements, livestock, stocks of produce, etc.

(4) The following peasant Mandate, compiled by the newspaper *Izvestia Userossiiskogo Soveta Krestyanskikh Deputatov*<sup>217</sup> from 242 local peasant mandates and published in No. 88 of that paper (Petrograd, No. 88, August 19, 1917), shall serve everywhere to

guide the implementation of the great land reforms until a final decision on the latter is taken by the Constituent Assembly.

### Peasant Mandate on the Land

"The land question in its full scope can be settled only by the popular Constituent Assembly.

"The most equitable settlement of the land question is to be as follows:

"(1) *Private ownership of land shall be abolished for ever*; land shall not be sold, purchased, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise alienated.

"All land, whether *state, crown, monastery, church, factory, entailed,*<sup>218</sup> *private, public, peasant, etc., shall be confiscated without compensation* and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the use of all those who cultivate it.

"Persons who suffer by this property revolution shall be deemed to be entitled to public support only for the period necessary for adaptation to the new conditions of life.

"(2) All mineral wealth—ore, oil, coal, salt, etc., and also all forests and waters of state importance, shall pass into the exclusive use of the state. All the small streams, lakes, woods, etc., shall pass into the use of the communes, to be administered by the local self-government bodies.

"(3) Lands on which *high-level scientific* farming is practised—orchards, plantations, seed plots, nurseries, hothouses, etc.—*shall not be divided up, but shall be converted into model farms*, to be turned over for exclusive use *to the state or to the communes*, depending on the size and importance of such lands.

"Household land in towns and villages, with orchards and vegetable gardens, shall be reserved for the use of their present owners, the size of the holdings, and the size of tax levied for the use thereof, to be determined by law.

"(4) Stud farms, government and private pedigree stock and poultry farms, etc., shall be confiscated and become the property of the whole people, and pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on the size and importance of such farms.

"The question of compensation shall be examined by the Constituent Assembly.

"(5) All livestock and farm implements of the confiscated estates shall pass into the exclusive use of the state or a commune, depending on their size and importance, and no compensation shall be paid for this.

"The farm implements of peasants with little land shall not be subject to confiscation.

"(6) The right to use the land shall be accorded to all citizens of the Russian state (without distinction of sex) desiring to cultivate it by their own labour, with the help of their families, or in partnership, but only as long as they are able to cultivate it. The employment of hired labour is not permitted.

"In the event of the temporary physical disability of any member of a village commune for a period of up to two years, the village commune shall be obliged to assist him for this period by collectively cultivating his land until he is again able to work.

"Peasants who, owing to old age or ill-health, are permanently disabled and unable to cultivate the land personally, shall lose their right to the use of it but, in return, shall receive a pension from the state.

"(7) Land tenure shall be on an equality basis, i.e. the land shall be distributed among the working people in conformity with a labour standard or a subsistence standard, depending on local conditions.

"There shall be absolutely no restriction on the forms of land tenure—household, farm, communal, or co-operative, as shall be decided in each individual village and settlement.

"(8) All land, when alienated, shall become part of the national land fund. Its distribution among the peasants shall be in charge of the local and central self-government bodies, from democratically organised village and city communes, in which there are no distinctions of social rank, to central regional government bodies.

"The land fund shall be subject to periodical redistribution, depending on the growth of population and the increase in the productivity and the scientific level of farming.

"When the boundaries of allotments are altered, the original nucleus of the allotment shall be left intact.

"The land of the members who leave the commune shall revert to the land fund; preferential right to such land shall be given to the near relatives of the members who have left, or to persons designated by the latter.

"The cost of fertilisers and improvements put into the land, to the extent that they have not been fully used up at the time the allotment is returned to the land fund, shall be compensated.

"Should the available land fund in a particular district prove inadequate for the needs of the local population, the surplus population shall be settled elsewhere.

"The state shall take upon itself the organisation of resettlement and shall bear the cost thereof, as well as the cost of supplying implements, etc.

"Resettlement shall be effected in the following order: landless peasants desiring to resettle, then members of the commune who are of vicious habits, deserters, and so on, and, finally, by lot or by agreement."

The entire contents of this Mandate, as expressing the absolute will of the vast majority of the class-conscious peasants of all Russia, is proclaimed a provisional law, which, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, shall be carried into effect as far as possible immediately, and as to certain of its provisions with due gradualness, as shall be determined by the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

(5) The land of ordinary peasants and ordinary Cossacks shall not be confiscated.

---

Voices are being raised here that the decree itself and the Mandate were drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries. What of it? Does it matter who drew them up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realise where the truth lies. And even if the peasants continue to follow the Socialist-Revolutionaries, even if they give this party a majority in the Constituent Assembly, we shall still say—what of it? Experience is the best teacher and it will show who is right. Let the peasants solve this problem from one end and we shall solve it from the other. Experience will



oblige us to draw together in the general stream of revolutionary creative work, in the elaboration of new state forms. We must be guided by experience; we must allow complete freedom to the creative faculties of the masses. The old government, which was overthrown by armed uprising, wanted to settle the land problem with the help of the old, unchanged tsarist bureaucracy. But instead of solving the problem, the bureaucracy only fought the peasants. The peasants have learned something during the eight months of our revolution; they want to settle all land problems themselves. We are therefore opposed to all amendments to this draft law. We want no details in it, for we are writing a decree, not a programme of action. Russia is vast, and local conditions vary. We trust that the peasants themselves will be able to solve the problem correctly, properly, better than we could do it. Whether they do it in our spirit or in the spirit of the Socialist-Revolutionary programme is not the point. The point is that the peasants should be firmly assured that there are no more land-owners in the countryside, that they themselves must decide all questions, and that they themselves must arrange their own lives. (*Loud applause.*)

## 5 DECISION TO FORM THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' GOVERNMENT

The All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies resolves:

To establish a provisional workers' and peasants' government, to be known as the Council of People's Commissars, to govern the country until the Constituent Assembly is convened. The management of individual branches of state activity is entrusted to commissions whose members shall ensure the fulfilment of the programme announced by the Congress, and shall work in close contact with mass organisations of men and women workers, sailors, soldiers, peasants and office employees. Governmental authority is vested in a collegium of the chairmen of those commissions, i.e., the Council of People's Commissars.

Control over the activities of the People's Commissars with the right to replace them is vested in the All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies and its Central Executive Committee.

At the present time the Council of People's Commissars is constituted as follows:

Chairman of the Council—*Uladimir Ulyanov (Lenin)*;  
 People's Commissar of the Interior—*A. I. Rykov*;  
 Agriculture—*U. P. Milyutin*;  
 Labour—*A. G. Shlyapnikov*;  
 Army and Navy Affairs—a committee consisting of: *U. A. Ovseyenko (Antonov)*, *N. U. Krylenko* and *P. Y. Dybenko*;  
 Commerce and Industry—*U. P. Nogin*;  
 Education—*A. U. Lunacharsky*;  
 Finance—*I. I. Skvortsov (Stepanov)*;  
 Foreign Affairs—*L. D. Bronstein (Trotsky)*;  
 Justice—*G. I. Oppokov (Lomov)*;  
 Food—*I. A. Teodorovich*;  
 Posts and Telegraphs!—*N. P. Avilov (Glebov)*;  
 Chairman for Nationalities Affairs—*J. U. Jugashvili (Stalin)*  
 The office of People's Commissar of Railways is temporarily vacant.

Written on October 26  
 (November 8), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
 pp. 247-63

The appeal "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" was published in the newspaper *Rabochy i Soldat* No 9, October 26 (November 8), 1917, the Reports on Peace and on Land and the "Concluding Speech Following the Discussion on the Report on Peace" were printed in *Pravda* No. 171 and *Izvestia* No. 209, November 10 (October 28), 1917; the "Decree on Peace" was published in *Pravda* No 170 and *Izvestia* No 208, November 9 (October 27), 1917 and the "Decree on Land" in *Pravda* No. 171 and *Izvestia* No 209, November 10 (October 28), 1917, the "Decision to Form the Workers' and Peasants' Government" was printed in *Rabochy i Soldat* No 10, October 27 (November 9), 1917

---

## DRAFT REGULATIONS ON WORKERS' CONTROL

1. *Workers' control* over the production, storage, purchase and sale of all products and raw materials shall be introduced in all industrial, commercial, banking, agricultural and other enterprises employing not less than five workers and office employees (together), or with an annual turnover of not less than 10,000 rubles.

2. Workers' control shall be exercised by all the workers and office employees of an enterprise, either directly, if the enterprise is small enough to permit it, or through their elected representatives, who shall be elected *immediately* at general meetings, at which minutes of the elections shall be taken and the names of those elected communicated to the government and to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

3. Unless permission is given by the elected representatives of the workers and office employees, the suspension of work of an enterprise or an industrial establishment of state importance (see Clause 7), or any change in its operation, is strictly prohibited.

4. The elected representatives shall be given access to *all* books and documents and to *all* warehouses and stocks of materials, instruments and products without exception.

5. The decisions of the elected representatives of the workers and office employees are binding upon the owners of enterprises and may be annulled only by trade unions and their congresses.

6. In all enterprises of state importance *all* owners and *all* representatives of the workers and office employees elected for the purpose of exercising workers' control shall be answerable to the state for the maintenance of the strictest order and discipline and for the protection of property. Persons guilty of dereliction of duty, concealment of stocks, accounts, etc., shall be

punished by the confiscation of the whole of their property and by imprisonment for a term of up to five years.

7. By enterprises of state importance are meant all enterprises working for defence, or in any way connected with the manufacture of articles necessary for the existence of the masses of the population.

8. More detailed rules on workers' control shall be drawn up by the local Soviets of Workers' Deputies and by conferences of factory committees, and also by committees of office employees at general meetings of their representatives.

Written on October 26 or 27  
(November 8 or 9), 1917

First published in 1929 .  
in the second and third Russian editions  
of Lenin's *Collected Works*,  
Vol XXII

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 264-65

---

## WIRELESS MESSAGE OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS OCTOBER 30 (NOVEMBER 12), 1917

### Calling Everyone

The All-Russia Congress of Soviets has set up a new Soviet Government. Kerensky's government has been overthrown and arrested. Kerensky has fled. All institutions are in the hands of the Soviet Government. A revolt of officer cadets who had been released on parole on October 25 broke out on October 29. The revolt was suppressed that same day. Kerensky and Savinkov, together with the officer cadets and a part of the Cossacks, have made their way by deceit to Tsarskoye Syelo. The Soviet Government has mustered forces for the suppression of the new Kornilov advance on Petrograd. The fleet, headed by the armoured battleship *Republic*, has been summoned to the capital. Kerensky's officer cadets and Cossacks are wavering. Prisoners arriving from Kerensky's camp assure us that the Cossacks have been deceived and that if they come to realise the true state of affairs they will refuse to shoot. The Soviet Government is making every effort to avert bloodshed. If bloodshed cannot be avoided and if Kerensky's units do begin to shoot, the Soviet Government will not hesitate to suppress the new Kerensky-Kornilov campaign ruthlessly.

We announce for your information that the Congress of Soviets, which has already dispersed, adopted two important decrees: (1) on the immediate transfer of all the landed estates to the peasant committees, and (2) on the proposal of a democratic peace.

*Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin),*  
Chairman of the Soviet Government

---

**SPEECHES**  
**AT A MEETING OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.)**  
**NOVEMBER 1 (14), 1917**

**MINUTES**

1

Comrade Lenin considers that Kamenev's policy must be checked at once. There is now no point in negotiating with the Vikzhel.<sup>219</sup> Troops must be dispatched to Moscow. He proposes a resolution on the Vikzhel. The Vikzhel is not represented on the Soviet, and must not be admitted to it; the Soviets are voluntary organisations, and the Vikzhel has no support among the people.

2

Comrade Lenin considers that the negotiations were to serve as diplomatic cover for military operations. The only correct solution would be to put an end to the wavering of the waverers and to become firm ourselves. Assistance must be given to the Muscovites, and our victory will be assured.

3

Comrade Lenin considers the question a fundamental one, and thinks it is time to put an end to wavering. It is obvious that the Vikzhel sides with the Kaledins and Kornilovs. There must be no vacillation. We are backed by the majority of the workers and peasants and of the army. Nobody here has proved that the rank and file are against us. Either with the agents of Kaledin, or with the rank and file. We must rely on the people, we must send propagandists into the countryside. The Vikzhel was called upon to transport troops to Moscow; it refused, we must appeal to the people, and they will overthrow it.

---

## **RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) ON THE OPPOSITION WITHIN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE NOVEMBER 2 (15), 1917**

The Central Committee considers that the present meeting is of historic importance and that it is therefore necessary to record the two positions which have been revealed here.

1. The Central Committee considers that the opposition formed within the Central Committee has departed completely from all the fundamental positions of Bolshevism and of the proletarian class struggle in general by reiterating the utterly un-Marxist talk of the impossibility of a socialist revolution in Russia and of the necessity of yielding to the ultimatums and threats of resignation on the part of the obvious minority in the Soviet organisation, thus thwarting the will and the decision of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets and sabotaging the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry which has been inaugurated.

2. The Central Committee lays the whole responsibility for hindering revolutionary work and for the vacillations, so criminal at the present moment, on this opposition, and invites them to transfer their discussion and their scepticism to the press and to withdraw from the practical work they do not believe in. For this opposition reflects not only but intimidation by the bourgeoisie and the sentiments of the exhausted (not the revolutionary) section of the population.

3. The Central Committee affirms that the purely Bolshevik government cannot be renounced without betraying the slogan of Soviet power, since the majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, without excluding anybody from the Congress, entrusted power to this government.

4. The Central Committee affirms that, without betraying the slogan of the power of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, there can be no entering into petty bargaining over the affiliation to the Soviets of organisations of a non-Soviet type, i.e., organisations which are not voluntary associations of the revolutionary vanguard of the people who are fighting for the overthrow of the landowners and capitalists.

5. The Central Committee affirms that to yield to the ultimatums and threats of the minority of the Soviets would be

tantamount to complete renunciation not only of Soviet power but of democracy, for such yielding would be tantamount to the majority's fear to make use of its majority, it would be tantamount to submitting to anarchy and inviting the repetition of ultimatums on the part of any minority.

6. The Central Committee affirms that, not having excluded anybody from the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, it is even now fully prepared to permit the return of those who walked out and to agree to a coalition within the Soviets with those who walked out, and that, consequently, all talk about the Bolsheviks refusing to share power with anybody is absolutely false.

7. The Central Committee affirms that on the day the present government was formed, a few hours before its formation, the Central Committee invited three representatives of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to attend its meeting and formally proposed that they should join the government. The refusal of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, although it was provisional and conditional, places on these Left Socialist-Revolutionaries the entire responsibility for the fact that an agreement with them was not reached.

8. The Central Committee recalls that a resolution, proposed by the Bolshevik group, was adopted by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets expressing readiness to reinforce the Soviet both by soldiers from the trenches and by peasants from the localities, from the villages, and that therefore the assertion that the Bolshevik government is opposed to a coalition with the peasants is absolutely false. On the contrary, the Central Committee declares that the land law of our government, which was wholly copied from the Socialist-Revolutionary Mandate, is practical proof of the complete and most sincere readiness of the Bolsheviks to effect a coalition with the vast majority of Russia's population.

9. The Central Committee affirms, finally, that despite all difficulties, the victory of socialism both in Russia and in Europe can only be ensured by the unswerving continuation of the present government's policy. The Central Committee expresses its firm belief in the victory of this socialist revolution and calls upon all sceptics and waverers to abandon their waverings and whole-heartedly and with supreme energy support the actions of this government.

*Lenin*

Published, without the first  
three points, on November 17 (4),  
1917 in *Pravda* No 180

First published in full in 1932  
in the second and third Russian  
editions of *Lenin's Collected Works*,  
Vol XXX

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 217-79



---

## ULTIMATUM FROM THE MAJORITY ON THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.S.D.L.P.(B.) TO THE MINORITY

The majority on the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks), fully approving the policy so far pursued by the Council of People's Commissars, considers it necessary to address the following categorical statement to the minority on the Central Committee.

Our Party's policy at the present moment is defined in the resolution submitted by Comrade Lenin and adopted yesterday, November 2, by the Central Committee.\* This resolution declares that every attempt to induce our Party to decline power is treason to the proletariat's cause, since the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in the name of the millions of workers, soldiers and peasants, has entrusted this power to the representatives of our Party on the basis of our programme. This fundamental line of our tactics, which follows logically from our whole struggle against the conciliators and which guided us in the uprising against Kerensky's government, at present constitutes the revolutionary essence of Bolshevism and is once again endorsed by the Central Committee. This line is absolutely binding on all members of the Party, and first and foremost, on the Central Committee minority.

Yet members of the minority, both before and after yesterday's meeting of the Central Committee, have been pursuing a policy which obviously runs counter to our Party's fundamental line and which is demoralising our own ranks by causing hesitation at a moment when the greatest firmness and steadfastness are essential.

Thus, at yesterday's meeting of the Central Executive Committee, the Bolshevik group, with the direct participation of the Central Committee's minority members, openly voted against a decision of the Central Committee (on the number and persons

---

\* See pp. 435-36 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

of the representatives of our Party in the government). This unparalleled violation of discipline, committed by Central Committee members behind the back of the Central Committee after many hours' discussions on the Central Committee, discussions provoked by these same members of the opposition, makes it obvious to us that the opposition intend to force the hand of Party institutions by sabotaging the Party's work at a moment when the fate of the Party, the fate of the revolution, depends upon the immediate result of this work.

We cannot and do not wish to bear responsibility for such a state of affairs.

Addressing the present statement to the minority of the Central Committee, we categorically demand a written reply to the question: Does the minority undertake to submit to Party discipline and to carry out the policy formulated in Comrade Lenin's resolution which was adopted by the Central Committee?

In the event of a negative or indefinite reply to this question we shall immediately place before the Petrograd Committee, the Moscow Committee, the Bolshevik group on the Central Executive Committee, the Petrograd City Conference and the Extraordinary Party Congress, the following alternative proposal:

Either the Party must entrust the present opposition with the task of forming a new government in conjunction with those of its allies on whose behalf the opposition is at present sabotaging our work—in which case we shall consider ourselves absolutely free in relation to this new government, which can contribute nothing but wavering, impotence and chaos.

Or—which we do not doubt—the Party will endorse the only possible revolutionary line, as expressed in yesterday's decision of the Central Committee—in which case the Party must categorically demand that the members of the opposition conduct their disorganising work outside our Party organisation. There is not and cannot be any other solution. It stands to reason, a split would be highly deplorable. But an honest and open split would now be incomparably better than internal sabotage, the thwarting of our own decisions, disorganisation and prostration. At any rate, we do not doubt for a moment that the submission of our differences (which are in the main a replica of our differences with the *Novaya Zhizn* and Martov groups) to the people's judgement will ensure our policy the unreserved and devoted support of the revolutionary workers, soldiers and peasants, and will very soon condemn the wavering opposition to impotent isolation.

---

## TO THE POPULATION

Comrades—workers, soldiers, peasants and all working people!

The workers' and peasants' revolution has definitely triumphed in Petrograd, having dispersed or arrested the last remnants of the small number of Cossacks deceived by Kerensky. The revolution has triumphed in Moscow too. Even before the arrival of a number of troop trains dispatched from Petrograd, the officer cadets and other Kornilovites in Moscow signed peace terms—the disarming of the cadets and the dissolution of the Committee of Salvation.<sup>220</sup>

Daily and hourly reports are coming in from the front and from the villages announcing the support of the overwhelming majority of the soldiers in the trenches and the peasants in the uyezds for the new government and its decrees on peace and the immediate transfer of the land to the peasants. The victory of the workers' and peasants' revolution is assured because the majority of the people have already sided with it.

It is perfectly understandable that the landowners and capitalists, and the *top groups* of office employees and civil servants closely linked with the bourgeoisie, in a word, all the wealthy and those supporting them, react to the new revolution with hostility, resist its victory, threaten to close the banks, disrupt or bring to a standstill the work of the different establishments, and hamper the revolution in every way, openly or covertly. Every politically-conscious worker was well aware that we would inevitably encounter resistance of this kind. The entire Party press of the Bolsheviks has written about this on numerous occasions. Not for a single minute will the working classes be intimidated by this resistance; they will not falter in any way before the threats and strikes of the supporters of the bourgeoisie.

The majority of the people are with us. The majority of the working and oppressed people all over the world are with us. Ours is the cause of justice. Our victory is assured.

The resistance of the capitalists and the high-ranking employees will be smashed. Not a single person will be deprived

of his property except under the special state law proclaiming nationalisation of the banks and syndicates. This law is being drafted. Not one of the working people will suffer the loss of a kopek; on the contrary, he will be helped. Apart from the strictest accounting and control, apart from levying the set taxes in full the government has no intention of introducing any other measure.

In support of these just demands the vast majority of the people have rallied round the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government.

Comrades, working people! Remember that now *you yourselves* are at the helm of state. No one will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take into *your hands all affairs* of the state. *Your* Soviets are from now on the organs of state authority, legislative bodies with full powers.

Rally around your Soviets. Strengthen them. Get on with the job yourselves; begin right at the bottom, do not wait for anyone. Establish the strictest revolutionary law and order, mercilessly suppress any attempts to create anarchy by drunkards, hooligans, counter-revolutionary officer cadets, Kornilovites and their like.

Ensure the strictest control over production and accounting of products. Arrest and hand over to the revolutionary courts all who dare to injure the people's cause, irrespective of whether the injury is manifested in sabotaging production (damage, delay and subversion), or in hoarding grain and products or holding up shipments of grain, disorganising the railways and the postal, telegraph and telephone services, or any resistance whatever to the great cause of peace, the cause of transferring the land to the peasants, of ensuring workers' control over the production and distribution of products.

Comrades, workers, soldiers, peasants and all working people! Take *all* power into the hands of *your* Soviets. Be watchful and guard like the apple of your eye your land, grain, factories, equipment, products, transport—all that from now onwards will be *entirely* your property, public property. Gradually, with the consent and approval of the majority of the peasants, in keeping with their *practical* experience and that of the workers, we shall go forward firmly and unswervingly to the victory of socialism—a victory that will be sealed by the advanced workers of the most civilised countries, bring the peoples lasting peace and liberate them from all oppression and exploitation.

November 5, 1917

Petrograd

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin),*  
Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

---

## REPLY TO QUESTIONS FROM PEASANTS

In reply to numerous questions from peasants, be it known that all power in the country henceforth belongs wholly to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The workers' revolution has won in Petrograd and Moscow and is winning everywhere else in Russia. The Workers' and Peasants' Government ensures the alliance of the mass of the peasants, the poor peasants, the majority of the peasants, with the workers against the landowners, against the capitalists.

Hence the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, primarily the uyezd and then the gubernia Soviets, are from now on, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, vested with full governmental authority in their localities. Landed proprietorship has been *abolished* by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. A decree on land has already been issued by the present Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government. In conformity with this decree all landed estates pass over wholly to the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

The volost land committees must at once take over the administration of all landed estates, instituting the strictest accounting, maintaining perfect order and safeguarding with utmost strictness the former property of the landowners, which henceforth is the property of the whole people and which the people themselves must therefore protect.

All rulings of the volost land committees issued with the approval of the uyezd Soviets of Peasants' Deputies have the force of *law* and must be carried out unconditionally and without delay.

The Workers' and Peasants' Government appointed by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets has been named the Council of People's Commissars.

The Council of People's Commissars calls upon the peasants to take all power into their own hands in their respective localities

The workers give their full, undivided, all-round support to the peasants, are getting the production of machines and implements started, and ask the peasants to help by delivering grain.

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin),*  
Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

Petrograd  
November 5, 1917

*Izvestia* No. 219,  
November 8, 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp 299-300

---

# FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS)

TO ALL PARTY MEMBERS AND TO ALL  
THE WORKING CLASSES OF RUSSIA

Comrades,

It is a matter of common knowledge that the majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were delegates belonging to the Bolshevik Party.

This fact is fundamental for a proper understanding of the victorious revolution that has just taken place in Petrograd, Moscow and the whole of Russia. Yet that fact is constantly forgotten and ignored by all the supporters of the capitalists and their unwitting *aides*, who are undermining the fundamental principle of the new revolution, namely, *all power to the Soviets*. There must be no government in Russia other than the *Soviet Government*. Soviet power has been won in Russia, and the transfer of government from one Soviet party to another is guaranteed without any revolution, simply by a decision of the Soviets, simply by new elections of deputies to the Soviets. The majority at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets belonged to the Bolshevik Party. Therefore the only Soviet Government is the one formed by that Party. And everybody knows that the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, several hours prior to the formation of the new government, and to the presentation of the list of its members to the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, summoned to its session three of the most prominent members of the group of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, Comrades Kanišov, Spiro and Karelin, and *invited them* to join the new government. We very much regret that the Left Socialist-Revolutionary comrades refused; we regard their refusal as impermissible on the part of revolutionaries and champions of the working people. We are ready at any moment to include Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the government, but we declare that, as the majority party at the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, we are entitled to form the government, *and it is our duty* to the people to do so.

Everybody knows that the Central Committee of our Party submitted a purely Bolshevik list of People's Commissars to the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and that *the Congress approved this list of a purely Bolshevik government.*

The statements to the effect that the Bolshevik government is *not* a Soviet Government are therefore pure lies, and come, and can come, only from the enemies of the people, from the enemies of Soviet power. On the contrary, now, after the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, and until the Third Congress meets, or until new elections to the Soviets are held, or until a new government is formed by the Central Executive Committee, *only* a Bolshevik government can be regarded as the *Soviet* Government.

\* \* \*

Comrades, yesterday, November 4, several members of the Central Committee of our Party and of the Council of People's Commissars—Kamenev, Zinoviev, Nogin, Rykov, Milyutin and a few others—resigned from the Central Committee of our Party, and the three last named from the Council of People's Commissars. In a large party like ours, notwithstanding the proletarian and revolutionary line of our policy, it was inevitable that individual comrades should have proved to be insufficiently staunch and firm in the struggle against the enemies of the people. The tasks that now face our Party are really immense, the difficulties are enormous, and several members of our Party who formerly held posts of responsibility have flinched in face of the onslaught of the bourgeoisie and fled from our ranks. The bourgeoisie and all its helpers are jubilant over this fact and are maliciously rejoicing, clamouring about disintegration and predicting the fall of the Bolshevik government.

Comrades, do not believe these lies. The comrades who have resigned have acted as deserters, since they not only quitted the posts entrusted to them, but violated the direct decision of the Central Committee of our Party binding them to delay their resignation at least until a decision was taken by the Petrograd and Moscow Party organisations. We strongly condemn this desertion. We are profoundly convinced that all class-conscious workers, soldiers and peasants who belong to or sympathise with our Party will condemn the actions of the deserters with equal severity.

But we declare that the desertion of a few individuals belonging to the leading group of our Party cannot for a moment or in the slightest way shake the unity of the *masses* who follow our Party and that it therefore will not shake our Party.



You must recall, comrades, that two of the deserters, Kamenev and Zinoviev, acted as deserters and blacklegs even before the Petrograd uprising; for they not only voted against the uprising at the decisive meeting of the Central Committee on October 10, 1917, but, even *after* the decision had been taken by the Central Committee, agitated among the Party workers against the uprising. It is common knowledge that newspapers which fear to take the side of the workers and are more inclined to side with the bourgeoisie (e.g., *Novaya Zhizn*), raised at that time, in common with the whole bourgeois press, a hue and cry about the "disintegration" of our Party, about "the collapse of the uprising" and so on. Events, however, swiftly refuted the lies and slanders of some and the doubts, waverings and cowardice of others. The "storm" they tried to raise over the efforts of Kamenev and Zinoviev to thwart the Petrograd uprising proved to be *a storm in a teacup*, while the great enthusiasm of the people, the great heroism of millions of workers, soldiers, and peasants in Petrograd, in Moscow, at the front, in the trenches and in the villages, pushed the deserters out of the way as easily as a railway train pushes aside splinters of wood.

Shame on all the faint-hearted, all the waverers and doubters, on all those who allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie or who have succumbed to the outcries of their direct and indirect supporters! *There is not the slightest* hesitation among the *mass* of the workers and soldiers of Petrograd, Moscow and other places. Our Party stands solidly and firmly, as one man, in defence of Soviet power, in defence of the interests of all the working people, and first and foremost of the workers and poor peasants.

Bourgeois hacks and those who allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie accuse us in chorus of being uncompromising, of being irreconcilable, of refusing to share power with another party. That is not true, comrades. *We have invited* and continue to invite the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to share power with us. It is not our fault that *they have refused*. We began the negotiations, and, after the delegates of the Second Congress of Soviets had dispersed, we made all kinds of concessions in the course of these negotiations, even to the point of provisionally agreeing to admit representatives of a section of the Petrograd City Council, that nest of Kornilov men, which will be the first to be swept away by the people should the Kornilovite scoundrels, should the darling sons of the capitalists and landowners, the officer cadets, attempt once more to resist the will of the people as they did last Sunday in Petrograd and as they would like to do again (as is proved by the exposure of the conspiracy of Purishkevich and the documents seized on him yesterday, November 3). But the gentlemen who stand behind the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and act

through them in the interests of the bourgeoisie interpreted our readiness to make concessions as weakness, and took advantage of this readiness to present us with new ultimatums. At the conference on November 3, Mr. Abramovich and Mr. Martov appeared and presented an ultimatum: no negotiations until our government puts a stop to the arrests and to the suppression of bourgeois newspapers.

Both our Party and the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets *refused* to accept this ultimatum, which obviously emanated from the supporters of Kaledin, the bourgeoisie, Kerensky and Kornilov. The conspiracy of Purishkevich and the appearance in Petrograd on November 5 of a delegation from a unit of the 17th Army Corps threatening us with a march on Petrograd (a ridiculous threat, for the advanced detachments of these Kornilovites have already been beaten and have fled at Gatchina, while most of them have refused to fight against the Soviets)—all these events have proved who were the *real* authors of the ultimatum of Mr. Abramovich and Mr. Martov and whom these people *really* served.

Let the working people, therefore, remain calm and firm! Our Party will never yield to the ultimatums of the minority in the Soviets, the minority who have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie and, despite their "good intentions", virtually act as puppets in the hands of the Kornilov gang.

We stand firmly by the principle of Soviet power, i.e., the power of the *majority* obtained at the last Congress of Soviets. We agreed, and *still agree*, to share power with the minority in the Soviets, provided that minority loyally and honestly undertake to submit to the majority and carry out the programme, *approved by the whole* Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets, for gradual, but firm and undeviating steps towards socialism. But we shall not submit to any ultimatums of groups of intellectuals who are not backed by the people, and who *in actual fact* are backed only by the Kornilovites, the Savinkov men, the officer cadets, etc.

Let the working people, therefore, remain calm and firm! Our Party, the party of the Soviet majority, stands solid and united in defence of their interests and, as before, behind our Party stand the millions of the workers in the cities, the soldiers in the trenches and the peasants in the villages, prepared at all costs to achieve the victory of peace and the victory of socialism!

---

# ***THE EXTRAORDINARY ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF PEASANTS' DEPUTIES***

***NOVEMBER 10-25 (NOVEMBER 23-DECEMBER 8), 1917***

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION**

The Peasants' Congress fully and in every way supports the law (decree) on land of October 26, 1917, approved by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and published by the Council of People's Commissars as the provisional workers' and peasants' government of the Russian Republic. The Peasants' Congress declares its firm and unshakable resolve to ensure the implementation of this law, calls upon all peasants to support it unanimously and to carry it out themselves in the localities without delay, and also to elect to all and every responsible post and office only people who have proved not in word but in deed their complete devotion to the interests of the working and exploited peasants, their readiness and ability to uphold these interests against any resistance the landowners, capitalists, and their supporters or accomplices may offer.

The Peasants' Congress also expresses its conviction that the full implementation of all the measures constituting the law on land is possible only if the workers' socialist revolution which began on October 25 is successful, for only the socialist revolution can ensure the transfer of the land to the working peasantry without compensation, the confiscation of the landowners' implements, full protection of the interests of agricultural wage-workers and the immediate commencement of the unconditional abolition of the entire system of capitalist wage-slavery, the proper and planned distribution of the products of both agriculture and industry among the various regions and the population of the country, control over the banks (without such control the people will not be masters of the land even though private property in land is abolished), all-round state assistance specifically to the working and exploited people, etc.

Therefore the Peasants' Congress, fully supporting the Revolution of October 25, and supporting it precisely as a socialist revolution, declares its unswerving resolve to carry out, with due grad-

ualness but without the slightest vacillation, measures aimed at the socialist transformation of the Russian Republic.

A necessary condition for the victory of the socialist revolution, which alone can secure the lasting triumph and full implementation of the law on land, is the close alliance of the working and exploited peasantry with the working class—the proletariat—in all the advanced countries. In the Russian Republic the entire organisation and administration of the state from top to bottom must henceforth be based on such an alliance. Rejecting all and every attempt, direct and indirect, overt and covert, to return to a course that experience has rejected, to the course of conciliation with the bourgeoisie and the champions of bourgeois policy, this alliance alone can ensure the victory of socialism the world over..

Written on November 14 (27), 1917

Published in *Pravda* No. 190 and  
*Izvestia* No. 226,  
November 15 (28), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26  
pp. 327-29

## 2 CONCLUDING SPEECH ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION NOVEMBER 18 (DECEMBER 1)

NEWSPAPER REPORT

Comrade Lenin first showed that the accusation of anarchism made against the Bolsheviks by the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries had not been proved.

In what way did socialists differ from anarchists? The anarchists did not recognise state power whereas the socialists, the Bolsheviks among them, did recognise it in the period of transition between the state of affairs then obtaining and the socialism towards which they were progressing.

The Bolsheviks favoured a strong authority, but it must be a workers' and peasants' authority.

All state power is compulsion, but until then it had always been the power of the minority, the power of the landowner and capitalist employed against the worker and peasant.

He said that the Bolsheviks stood for the state power that would be a firm authority of the majority of the workers and peasants employed against the capitalists and landowners.

Comrade Lenin then went on to show that the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' resolution on the land had called the new government a people's socialist government, and dwelt on the points

that could closely unite the Bolsheviks and Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The alliance of the peasants and workers was a basis for an agreement between the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks.

It was an honest coalition, an honest alliance, but it would be an honest coalition at the summit too, between the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks, if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were more definite in stating their conviction that the revolution was a socialist revolution. It was a socialist revolution. The abolition of private property in land, the introduction of workers' control, the nationalisation of the banks—all these were measures that would lead to socialism. They were not socialism, but they were measures that would lead to socialism by gigantic strides. The Bolsheviks did not promise the workers and peasants milk and honey immediately, but they did say that a close alliance between the workers and the exploited peasantry, a firm, unwavering struggle for the power of the Soviets would lead to socialism, and any party that really wanted to be a people's party would have to state clearly and decisively that the revolution was a socialist revolution.

And only in the event of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries stating that clearly and unambiguously would the Bolsheviks' alliance with them grow and become stronger.

It had been said that the Bolsheviks were against the socialisation of the land and could not, therefore, come to an agreement with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Bolsheviks answered that they were indeed against the Socialist-Revolutionaries' socialisation of the land but that did not prevent an honest alliance with them.

Today or tomorrow the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries would nominate their Minister of Agriculture, and the Bolsheviks would not vote against a law on the socialisation of the land if he proposed it; they would abstain from voting.

In conclusion Comrade Lenin stressed that only an alliance of workers and peasants could acquire land and make peace.

Among other things Comrade Lenin was asked what the Bolsheviks would do in the Constituent Assembly if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were there in a minority and proposed a bill on the socialisation of the land—would the Bolsheviks abstain from voting? Of course not. The Bolsheviks would vote for the bill but would make the proviso that they were voting for it in order to support the peasants against their enemies.

---

# ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEASANTS

A LETTER TO *PRAVDA*

Today, Saturday, November 18, in the course of a speech I made at the Peasants' Congress, I was publicly asked a question to which I forthwith replied. It is essential that this question and my reply should immediately be made known to all the reading public, for while formally speaking only in my own name, I was actually speaking in the name of the whole Bolshevik Party.

The matter was the following.

Touching on the question of an alliance between the Bolshevik workers and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, whom many peasants at present trust, I argued in my speech that this alliance *can* be an "honest coalition", an honest alliance, for there is *no* radical divergence of interests between the wage-workers and the working and exploited peasants. Socialism is *fully* able to meet the interests of both. *Only* socialism can meet their interests. Hence the possibility and necessity for an "honest coalition" between the proletarians and the working and exploited peasantry. On the contrary, a "coalition" (alliance) between the working and exploited classes, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other, *cannot* be an "honest coalition" because of the radical divergence of interests between these classes.

Imagine, I said, that there is a majority of Bolsheviks and a minority of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries in the government, or even, let us assume, only one Left Socialist-Revolutionary—the Commissar of Agriculture. Could the Bolsheviks practise an honest coalition under such circumstances?

They could; for, while they are irreconcilable in their fight against the counter-revolutionary elements (including the Right Socialist-Revolutionary and the defencist elements), the Bolsheviks would be obliged to *abstain* from voting on questions which concern purely Socialist-Revolutionary points in the land programme approved by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

Such, for instance, would be the point on equal land tenure and the redistribution of land among the small holders.

By abstaining from voting on such a point the Bolsheviks would not be changing their programme in the slightest. For, given the victory of socialism (workers' control over the factories, to be followed by their expropriation, the nationalisation of the banks, and the creation of a Supreme Economic Council for the regulation of the entire economic life of the country)—given that the workers *would be obliged* to agree to the transitional measures proposed by the small working and exploited peasants, provided such measures were *not detrimental* to the cause of socialism. Even Kautsky, when he was still a Marxist (1899-1909), frequently admitted—I said—that the measures of transition to socialism cannot be identical in countries with large-scale and those with small-scale farming.

We Bolsheviks would be obliged to abstain from voting when such a point was being decided in the Council of People's Commissars or in the Central Executive Committee, for if the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (as well as the peasants who support them) agreed to workers' control, to the nationalisation of the banks, etc., equal land tenure would be only one of the measures of *transition* to full socialism. For the proletariat to *impose* such transitional measures would be absurd; it is obliged, in the interests of the victory of socialism, to *yield* to the small working and exploited peasants in the choice of these transitional measures, for they could do *no harm* to the cause of socialism.

Thereupon, a Left Socialist-Revolutionary (it was Comrade Feofilaktov, if I am not mistaken) asked me the following question:

"How would the Bolsheviks act if in the Constituent Assembly the peasants wanted to pass a law on equal land tenure, while the bourgeoisie were opposed to the peasants and the decision depended on the Bolsheviks?"

I replied: under such circumstances, when the cause of socialism would be ensured by the introduction of workers' control, the nationalisation of the banks, etc., the alliance between the workers and the working and exploited peasants would make it obligatory for the party of the proletariat to vote for the peasants and against the bourgeoisie. The Bolsheviks, in my opinion, would be entitled when the vote was being taken to make a declaration of dissent, to place on record their non-agreement, etc., but to abstain from voting under such circumstances would be to betray their allies *in the fight for socialism* because of a difference with them on a partial issue. The Bolsheviks would never betray the peasants in such a situation. Equal land tenure and like measures *cannot* prejudice socialism if the power is in the

hands of a workers' and peasants' government, if workers' control has been introduced, the banks nationalised, a workers' and peasants' supreme economic body set up to direct (regulate) the *entire* economic life of the country, and so forth.

Such was my reply.

*N. Lenin*

Written on November 18 (December 1) 1917

Published in *Pravda* No 194  
December 2 (November 19), 1917

*Collected Works* Vol 26  
pp 333 35



---

## **SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**DECEMBER 1 (14), 1917**

### **SPEECH ON THE QUESTION OF SETTING UP A SUPREME ECONOMIC COUNCIL<sup>221</sup>**

**NEWSPAPER REPORT**

Lenin speaks in defence of the Soviet draft, pointing out that the Supreme Economic Council cannot be reduced to a parliament, but must be the same kind of fighting organ for combating the capitalists and landowners in the economy as the Council of People's Commissars is in politics

*V. I. Lenin* No. 19?  
December 3 (16) 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 36,  
p. 458

---

**REPORT ON THE ECONOMIC CONDITION  
OF PETROGRAD WORKERS AND THE TASKS  
OF THE WORKING CLASS DELIVERED  
AT A MEETING OF THE WORKERS'  
SECTION OF THE PETROGRAD SOVIET  
OF WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' DEPUTIES  
DECEMBER 4 (17), 1917**

**NEWSPAPER REPORT**

The Revolution of October 25 had shown the exceptional political maturity of the proletariat and its ability to stand firm in opposition to the bourgeoisie, said the speaker. The complete victory of socialism, however, would require a tremendous organisational effort filled with the knowledge that the proletariat must become the ruling class.

The proletariat was faced with the tasks of transforming the state system on socialist lines, for no matter how easy it would be to cite arguments in favour of a middle course, such a course would be insignificant, the country's economic situation having reached a state that would rule out any middle course. There was no place left for half-measures in the gigantic struggle against imperialism and capitalism.

The point at issue was—win or lose.

The workers should and did understand this; this was obvious because they had rejected half-way, compromise decisions. The more profound the revolution, the greater the number of active workers required to accomplish the replacement of capitalism by a socialist machinery. Even if there were no sabotage, the forces of the petty bourgeoisie would be inadequate. The task was one that could be accomplished only by drawing on the masses, only by the independent activity of the masses. The proletariat, therefore, should not think of improving its position at the moment, but should think of becoming the ruling class. It could not be expected that the rural proletariat would be clearly and firmly conscious of its own interests. Only the working class could be, and every proletarian, conscious of the great prospects, should feel himself to be a leader and carry the masses with him.

The proletariat should become the ruling class in the sense of being the leader of all who work; it should be the ruling class politically.

The illusion that only the bourgeoisie could run the state must be fought against. The proletariat must take the rule of the state upon itself.

The capitalists were doing everything they could to complicate the tasks of the working class. And all working-class organisations—trade unions, factory committees and others—would have to conduct a determined struggle in the economic sphere. The bourgeoisie was spoiling everything, sabotaging everything, in order to wreck the working-class revolution. And the tasks of organising production devolved entirely on the working class. They should do away, once and for all, with the illusion that state affairs or the management of banks and factories were beyond the power of the workers. All this could be solved only by tremendous day-to-day organisational work.

It was essential to organise the exchange of products and introduce regular accounting and control—these were tasks for the working class, and the knowledge necessary for the accomplishment had been provided by factory life.

Every factory committee should concern itself not only with the affairs of its own factory, but should also be an organisation nucleus helping arrange the life of the state as a whole.

It was easy to issue a decree on the abolition of private property, but it must and could be implemented only by the workers themselves. Let there be mistakes—they would be the mistakes of a new class creating a new way of life.

There was not and could not be a definite plan for the organisation of economic life.

Nobody could provide one. But it could be done from below, by the masses, through their experience. Instructions would, of course, be given and ways would be indicated, but it was necessary to begin simultaneously from above and from below.

The Soviets would have to become bodies regulating all production in Russia, but in order that they should not become staff headquarters without troops, work in the lower echelons was needed. . . .\*

The working-class masses must set about the organisation of control and production on a country-wide scale. Not the organisation of individuals, but the organisation of all the working people, would be a guarantee of success; if they achieved that, if they organised economic life, everything opposing them would disappear of its own accord.

---

## THESES ON THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

1. The demand for the convocation of a Constituent Assembly was a perfectly legitimate part of the programme of revolutionary Social-Democracy, because in a bourgeois republic the Constituent Assembly represents the highest form of democracy and because, in setting up a Pre-parliament, the imperialist republic headed by Kerensky was preparing to rig the elections and violate democracy in a number of ways.

2. While demanding the convocation of a Constituent Assembly, revolutionary Social-Democracy has ever since the beginning of the Revolution of 1917 repeatedly emphasised that a republic of Soviets is a higher form of democracy than the usual bourgeois republic with a Constituent Assembly.

3. For the transition from the bourgeois to the socialist system, for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Republic of Soviets (of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies) is not only a higher type of democratic institution (as compared with the usual bourgeois republic crowned by a Constituent Assembly), but is the only form capable of securing the most painless transition to socialism.

4. The convocation of the Constituent Assembly in our revolution on the basis of lists submitted in the middle of October 1917 is taking place under conditions which preclude the possibility of the elections to this Constituent Assembly faithfully expressing the will of the people in general and of the working people in particular.

5. Firstly, proportional representation results in a faithful expression of the will of the people only when the party lists correspond to the real division of the people according to the party groupings reflected in those lists. In our case, however, as is well known, the party which from May to October had the largest number of followers among the people, and especially among the peasants—the Socialist-Revolutionary Party—came out with united election lists for the Constituent Assembly in

the middle of October 1917, but split in November 1917, after the elections and before the Assembly met.

For this reason, there is not, nor can there be, even a formal correspondence between the will of the mass of the electors and the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly.

6. Secondly, a still more important, not a formal nor legal, but a socio-economic, class source of the discrepancy between the will of the people, and especially the will of the working classes, on the one hand, and the composition of the Constituent Assembly, on the other, is due to the elections to the Constituent Assembly having taken place at a time when the overwhelming majority of the people could not yet know the full scope and significance of the October, Soviet, proletarian-peasant revolution, which began on October 25, 1917, i.e., after the lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly had been submitted.

7. The October Revolution is passing through successive stages of development before our very eyes, winning power for the Soviets and wresting political rule from the bourgeoisie and transferring it to the proletariat and poor peasantry.

8. It began with the victory of October 24-25 in the capital, when the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the vanguard of the proletarians and of the most politically active section of the peasants, gave a majority to the Bolshevik Party and put it in power.

9. Then, in the course of November and December, the revolution spread to the entire army and peasants, this being expressed first of all in the deposition of the old leading bodies (army committees, gubernia peasant committees, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, etc.)—which expressed the superseded, compromising phase of the revolution, its bourgeois, and not proletarian, phase, and which were therefore inevitably bound to disappear under the pressure of the deeper and broader masses of the people—and in the election of new leading bodies in their place.

10. This mighty movement of the exploited people for the reconstruction of the leading bodies of their organisations has not ended even now, in the middle of December 1917, and the Railwaymen's Congress, which is still in session, represents one of its stages.

11. Consequently, the grouping of the class forces in Russia in the course of their class struggle is in fact assuming, in November and December 1917, a form differing in principle from the one that the party lists of candidates for the Constituent Assembly compiled in the middle of October 1917 could have reflected.

12. Recent events in the Ukraine (partly also in Finland and Byelorussia, as well as in the Caucasus) point similarly to a re-

grouping of class forces which is taking place in the process of the struggle between the bourgeois nationalism of the Ukrainian Rada,<sup>222</sup> the Finnish Diet, etc., on the one hand, and Soviet power, the proletarian-peasant revolution in each of these national republics, on the other.

13. Lastly, the civil war which was started by the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolutionary revolt against the Soviet authorities, against the workers' and peasants' government, has finally brought the class struggle to a head and has destroyed every chance of settling in a formally democratic way the very acute problems with which history has confronted the peoples of Russia, and in the first place her working class and peasants.

14. Only the complete victory of the workers and peasants over the bourgeois and landowner revolt (as expressed in the Cadet-Kaledin movement), only the ruthless military suppression of this revolt of the slave-owners can really safeguard the proletarian-peasant revolution. The course of events and the development of the class struggle in the revolution have resulted in the slogan "All Power to the Constituent Assembly!"—which disregards the gains of the workers' and peasants' revolution, which disregards Soviet power, which disregards the decisions of the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, of the Second All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies, etc.—*becoming in fact* the slogan of the Cadets and the Kaledinites and of their helpers. The entire people\* are now fully aware that the Constituent Assembly, if it parted ways with Soviet power, would inevitably be doomed to political extinction.

15. One of the particularly acute problems of national life is the problem of peace. A really revolutionary struggle for peace began in Russia only after the victory of the October 25 Revolution, and the first fruits of this victory were the publication of the secret treaties, the conclusion of an armistice, and the beginning of open negotiations for a general peace without annexations and indemnities.

Only now are the broad sections of the people actually receiving a chance fully and openly to observe the policy of revolutionary struggle for peace and to study its results.

At the time of the elections to the Constituent Assembly the mass of the people had no such chance.

It is clear that the discrepancy between the composition of the elected Constituent Assembly and the actual will of the people on the question of terminating the war is inevitable from this point of view too.

\* Then it follows in *Pravda*: "are becoming aware that this slogan actually means a struggle for eliminating Soviet power and...".

16. The result of all the above-mentioned circumstances taken together is that the Constituent Assembly, summoned on the basis of the election lists of the parties existing prior to the proletarian-peasant revolution under the rule of the bourgeoisie, must inevitably clash with the will and interests of the working and exploited classes which on October 25 began the socialist revolution against the bourgeoisie. Naturally, the interests of this revolution stand higher than the formal rights of the Constituent Assembly, even if those formal rights were not undermined by the absence in the law on the Constituent Assembly of a provision recognising the right of the people to recall their deputies and hold new elections at any moment.

17. Every direct or indirect attempt to consider the question of the Constituent Assembly from a formal, legal point of view, within the framework of ordinary bourgeois democracy and disregarding the class struggle and civil war, would be a betrayal of the proletariat's cause, and the adoption of the bourgeois standpoint. The revolutionary Social-Democrats are duty bound to warn all and sundry against this error, into which a few Bolshevik leaders, who have been unable to appreciate the significance of the October uprising and the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat, have strayed.

18. The only chance of securing a painless solution to the crisis which has arisen owing to the divergence between the elections to the Constituent Assembly, on the one hand, and the will of the people and the interests of the working and exploited classes, on the other, is for the people to exercise as broadly and as rapidly as possible the right to elect the members of the Constituent Assembly anew, and for the Constituent Assembly to accept the law of the Central Executive Committee on these new elections, to proclaim that it unreservedly recognises Soviet power, the Soviet revolution, and its policy on the questions of peace, the land and workers' control, and to resolutely join the camp of the enemies of the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution.

19. Unless these conditions are fulfilled, the crisis in connection with the Constituent Assembly can be settled only in a revolutionary way, by Soviet power adopting the most energetic, speedy, firm and determined revolutionary measures against the Cadet-Kaledin counter-revolution, no matter behind what slogans and institutions (even participation in the Constituent Assembly) this counter-revolution may hide. Any attempt to tie the hands of Soviet power in this struggle would be tantamount to aiding counter-revolution.

Written on December 11 or 12  
(24 or 25), 1917

Published in *Pravda* No. 213,  
December 26 (13), 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 379-83

---

## FOR BREAD AND PEACE

Two questions now take precedence over all other political questions—the question of bread and the question of peace. The imperialist war, the war between the biggest and richest banking firms, Britain and Germany, that is being waged for world domination, the division of the spoils, for the plunder of small and weak nations; this horrible, criminal war has ruined all countries, exhausted all peoples, and confronted mankind with the alternative—either sacrifice all civilisation and perish or throw off the capitalist yoke in the revolutionary way, do away with the rule of the bourgeoisie and win socialism and durable peace.

If socialism is not victorious, peace between the capitalist states will be only a truce, an interlude, a time of preparation for a fresh slaughter of the peoples. Peace and bread are the basic demands of the workers and the exploited. The war has made these demands extremely urgent. The war has brought hunger to the most civilised countries, to those most culturally developed. On the other hand, the war, as a tremendous historical process, has accelerated social development to an unheard-of degree. Capitalism had developed into imperialism, i.e., into monopoly capitalism, and under the influence of the war it has become state monopoly capitalism. We have now reached the stage of world economy that is the immediate stepping stone to socialism.

The socialist revolution that has begun in Russia is, therefore, only the beginning of the world socialist revolution. Peace and bread, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, revolutionary means for the healing of war wounds, the complete victory of socialism—such are the aims of the struggle.

Petrograd, December 14, 1917

Written in Russian  
on December 14 (27), 1917  
Signed *Lenin*

First published in German  
in May 1918 in the newspaper  
*Jugend-Internationale* No. 11  
Signed *W. Lenin*

*Collected Works* Vol. 26  
pp. 286-87

First published in Russian  
(translated from the German)  
in 1927 in the book *Transactions*  
of the Lenin Institute, Vol. II

Facsimile of the first paragraph  
of the MS published in 1919  
in *Det röda Ryssland*,  
1917 7/14 1919, Stockholm



---

**SPEECH ON THE NATIONALISATION  
OF THE BANKS DELIVERED AT A MEETING  
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
DECEMBER 14 (27), 1917**

**MINUTES**

The last speaker tried to intimidate us by asserting that we are heading towards an abyss, towards certain destruction. There is, however, nothing new for us in this intimidation. *Novaya Zhizn*, the newspaper that expresses the views of the group to which the speaker belongs, said before the October days that our revolution would bring nothing but disorders and anarchic riots. Talk about our travelling the wrong road is, therefore, a reflection of bourgeois psychology that even disinterested people cannot get rid of. (*Voice from among the internationalists*: "Demagoguery!") No, that is not demagoguery, it is your constant talk of the axe that is real demagoguery.

The measures proposed in the decree are only an effective way of ensuring control.

You speak of the intricacy of the machinery, of its fragility and of the involved nature of the problem—these are elementary truths that everybody is aware of. But if these truths are merely used to put a brake on all socialist undertakings, we say that anyone who takes that line is a demagogue, and a dangerous demagogue at that.

We want to begin an inventory of the vaults, but the learned specialists tell us there is nothing in them but documents and securities. Then what is there bad about representatives of the people checking them?

If what they say is true, why do those same learned specialists who criticise us not come out with it openly? Whenever the Council makes decisions they declare that they agree with us, but only in principle. This is the way of the bourgeois intelligentsia, of all conciliators, who ruin everything with their constant agreement in principle and disagreement in practice.

If you know so much about all these things and have the experience, why don't you help us, why do we meet with nothing but sabotage from you in our difficult task?

You proceed from a correct scientific theory, but for us theory forms the basis of actions to be undertaken, it gives us confidence in those actions and does not scare the life out of us. Of course it is difficult to make a beginning and we often come up against fragile things; nevertheless we have coped with them, are coping with them and shall continue to cope with them.

If book-learning were to serve no other purpose than that of hampering every new step and instilling eternal fear of the new, it would be useless.

Nobody, with the exception of the utopian socialists, has ever asserted that victory is possible without resistance, without the dictatorship of the proletariat and without seizing the old world in an iron grip.

You accepted this dictatorship in principle, but when that word is translated into Russian, called an "iron grip" and applied in practice, you warn us of the fragility and involved nature of the matter.

You stubbornly refuse to see that the iron hand that destroys also creates. It is an undoubted advantage to us to go over from principles to deeds.

To effect control we have called upon the bankers and together with them have elaborated measures that they agreed to, so that loans could be obtained under full control and properly accounted for. But there are people among the bank employees who have the interests of the people at heart and who have told us: "They are deceiving you, make haste and check their criminal activity that is directly harmful to you." And we did make haste.

We realise that this is an involved measure. None of us, even those who are trained economists, will undertake to carry it out. We shall invite the specialists who are engaged in that work, but only when we have the keys in our own hands. Then we shall even be able to draw advisers from the former millionaires. We invite anybody who wants to work as long as he does not try to reduce every revolutionary enterprise to mere words; that is something we shall not stand for. We use the words "dictatorship of the proletariat" in all seriousness and we shall effect that dictatorship.

We wanted to take the line of agreement with the banks, we gave them loans to finance factories, but they carried out sabotage on an unprecedented scale, and practical experience has forced us to adopt other measures of control.

A comrade from the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries has said that in principle they would vote for the immediate nationalisation of the banks and afterwards work out practical measures in the shortest possible time. But he was wrong in that, because our draft does not contain anything but principles. The Supreme

Economic Council is waiting to discuss them, but if the decree is not approved the banks will immediately do everything to further disrupt the economy.

The adoption of the decree is urgent, otherwise opposition and sabotage will ruin us. (*Stormy applause.*)

*Pravda* No. 216  
December 29 (16), 1917  
and *Izvestia* No. 253,  
December 16, 1917

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 388-90

---

## **DRAFT DECREE ON THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND ON MEASURES NECESSARY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

The critical food situation and the threat of famine caused by the profiteering and sabotage of the capitalists and officials, as well as by the general economic ruin, make it imperative to adopt extraordinary revolutionary measures to combat this evil.

To enable all citizens of the state, and in the first place all the working classes, to undertake this struggle under the leadership of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, and normalise the country's economic life immediately and comprehensively, stopping at nothing and acting in the most revolutionary manner, the following regulations are decreed:

### **DRAFT DECREE ON THE NATIONALISATION OF THE BANKS AND ON MEASURES NECESSARY FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

1. All joint-stock companies are proclaimed the property of the state.

2. Members of boards and directors of joint-stock companies, as well as all shareholders belonging to the wealthy classes (i.e., possessing property to the value of over 5,000 rubles or an income exceeding 500 rubles per month), shall be obliged to continue to conduct the affairs of these enterprises in good order, observing the law on workers' control, presenting all shares to the State Bank and submitting to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies weekly reports on their activities.

3. State loans, foreign and domestic, are annulled (abrogated).

4. The interests of small holders of bonds and all kinds of shares, i.e., holders belonging to the working classes of the population, shall be fully guaranteed.

5. Universal labour conscription is introduced. All citizens of both sexes between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five shall be obliged to perform work assigned to them by the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, or by other bodies of Soviet power.

6. As a first step towards the introduction of universal labour conscription, it is decreed that members of the wealthy classes (see § 2) shall be obliged to keep, and have entries properly made in, consumer-worker books, or worker budget books, which must be presented to the appropriate workers' organisations or to the local Soviets and their bodies for weekly recording of the performance of work undertaken by each.

7. For the purpose of proper accounting and distribution of food and other necessities, every citizen of the state shall be obliged to join a consumers' society. The food boards, committees of supplies and other similar organisations, as well as the railway and transport unions, shall, under the direction of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, establish supervision to ensure the observance of the present law. Members of the wealthy classes, in particular, shall be obliged to perform the work to be assigned to them by the Soviets in the sphere of organising and conducting the affairs of the consumers' societies.

8. The railway workers' and employees' unions shall be obliged urgently to draw up and immediately begin to carry into effect emergency measures for the better organisation of transport, particularly as regards the delivery of food, fuel and other prime necessities, and shall be guided in the first place by the instructions and orders of the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies and then of the bodies authorised by the latter, and of the Supreme Economic Council.

Similarly, the railway unions, working in conjunction with the local Soviets, shall be responsible for most vigorously combating speculation in food and mercilessly suppressing all profiteering, not hesitating to adopt revolutionary measures.

9. Workers' organisations, unions of office employees and local Soviets shall be obliged immediately to set about switching enterprises which are closing down or are to be demobilised, and also unemployed workers, to useful work and the production of necessities, and to search for orders, raw materials and fuel. While under no circumstances postponing either this work or the beginning of the exchange of farm produce for industrial goods pending receipt of special instructions from higher bodies, the local unions and Soviets shall be strictly guided by the orders and instructions of the Supreme Economic Council.

10. Members of the wealthy classes shall be obliged to keep all their monetary possessions in the State Bank and its branches,

or in the savings-banks, and shall be entitled to withdraw not more than 100-125 rubles a week (as shall be established by the local Soviets) for living expenses; withdrawals for the needs of production and trade shall be made only on presentation of written certificates of the organs of workers' control.

To supervise the due observance of the present law, regulations will be introduced providing for the exchange of existing currency notes for new currency notes. All the property of persons guilty of deceiving the state and the people shall be confiscated.

11. All offenders against the present law, saboteurs and government officials who go on strike, as well as profiteers, shall be liable to a similar penalty, and also to imprisonment, dispatch to the front, or hard labour. The local Soviets and bodies under their jurisdiction shall urgently decide upon the most revolutionary measures to combat these real enemies of the people.

12. The trade unions and other organisations of the working people, in conjunction with the local Soviets, and with the collaboration of the most reliable persons recommended by Party and other organisations, shall form mobile groups of inspectors to supervise the implementation of the present law, to verify the quantity and quality of work performed and to bring to trial before the revolutionary courts persons guilty of violating or evading the law.

The workers and office employees of the nationalised enterprises must exert every effort and adopt extraordinary measures to improve the organisation of the work, strengthen discipline and raise the productivity of labour. The organs of workers' control are to present to the Supreme Economic Council weekly reports on the results achieved in this respect. Those found guilty of shortcomings and neglect are to be brought before revolutionary courts.

Written not earlier than  
December 14 (27) 1917

First published in an abridged  
form in November 1918  
in the magazine  
*Narodnoye khozyaystvo* No. 11

First published in full  
in 1949 in the fourth Russian  
edition of *Lenin's Collected  
Works*, Vol. 26

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 391-94

---

## HOW TO ORGANISE COMPETITION?

Bourgeois authors have been using up reams of paper praising competition, private enterprise, and all the other magnificent virtues and blessings of the capitalists and the capitalist system. Socialists have been accused of refusing to understand the importance of these virtues, and of ignoring "human nature". As a matter of fact, however, capitalism long ago replaced small, independent commodity production, under which competition could develop enterprise, energy and bold initiative to any *considerable* extent, by large- and very large-scale factory production, joint-stock companies, syndicates and other monopolies. Under *such* capitalism, competition means the incredibly brutal suppression of the enterprise, energy and bold initiative of the *mass* of the population, of its overwhelming majority, of ninety-nine out of every hundred toilers; it also means that competition is replaced by financial fraud, nepotism, servility on the upper rungs of the social ladder.

Far from extinguishing competition, socialism, on the contrary, for the first time creates the opportunity for employing it on a really *wide* and on a really *mass* scale, for actually drawing the majority of working people into a field of labour in which they can display their abilities, develop the capacities, and reveal those talents, so abundant among the people whom capitalism crushed, suppressed and strangled in thousands and millions.

Now that a socialist government is in power our task is to organise competition.

The hangers-on and spongers on the bourgeoisie described socialism as a uniform, routine, monotonous and drab barrack system. The lackeys of the money-bags, the lickspittles of the exploiters, the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen used socialism as a bogey to "frighten" the people, who, under capitalism, were doomed to the penal servitude and the barrack-like discipline of arduous, monotonous toil, to a life of dire poverty and semi-starvation. The first step towards the emancipation of the people

from this penal servitude is the confiscation of the landed estates, the introduction of workers' control and the nationalisation of the banks. The next steps will be the nationalisation of the factories, the compulsory organisation of the whole population in consumers' societies, which are at the same time societies for the sale of products, and the state monopoly of the trade in grain and other necessities.

Only now is the opportunity created for the truly mass display of enterprise, competition and bold initiative. Every factory from which the capitalist has been ejected, or in which he has at least been curbed by genuine workers' control, every village from which the landowning exploiter has been smoked out and his land confiscated has only now become a field in which the working man can reveal his talents, unbend his back a little, rise to his full height, and feel that he is a human being. For the first time after centuries of working for others, of forced labour for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself* and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work.

Of course, this greatest change in human history from working under compulsion to working for oneself cannot take place without friction, difficulties, conflicts and violence against the inveterate parasites and their hangers-on. No worker has any illusions on that score. The workers and poor peasants, hardened by dire want and by many long years of slave labour for the exploiters, by their countless insults and acts of violence, realise that it will take time to *break* the resistance of those exploiters. The workers and peasants are not in the least infected with the sentimental illusions of the intellectual gentlemen, of the *Novaya Zhizn* crowd and other slush, who "shouted" themselves hoarse "denouncing" the capitalists and "gesticulated" against them, only to burst into tears and to behave like whipped puppies when it came to *deeds*, to putting threats into action, to carrying out in practice the work of *removing* the capitalists.

The great change from working under compulsion to working for oneself, to labour planned and organised on a gigantic, national (and to a certain extent international, world) scale, also requires—in addition to "*military*" measures for the suppression of the exploiters' resistance—tremendous *organisational*, organising effort on the part of the proletariat and the poor peasants. The organisational task is interwoven to form a single whole with the task of ruthlessly suppressing by military methods yesterday's slave-owners (capitalists) and their packs of lackeys—the bourgeois intellectual gentlemen. Yesterday's slave-owners and their "intellectual" stooges say and think, "We have always been organisers and chiefs. We have commanded, and we want



to continue doing so. We shall refuse to obey the 'common people', the workers and peasants. We shall not submit to them. We shall convert knowledge into a weapon for the defence of the privileges of the money-bags and of the rule of capital over the people."

That is what the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals say, think, and do. From the point of view of *self-interest* their behaviour is comprehensible. The hangers-on and spongers on the feudal landowners, the priests, the scribes, the bureaucrats as Gogol depicted them, and the "intellectuals" who hated Belinsky, also found it "hard" to part with serfdom. But the cause of the exploiters and of their "intellectual" menials is hopeless. The workers and peasants are beginning to break down their resistance—unfortunately, not yet firmly, resolutely and ruthlessly enough—and *break it down they will*.

"They" think that the "common people", the "common" workers and poor peasants, will be unable to cope with the great, truly heroic, in the world-historic sense of the word, organisational tasks which the socialist revolution has imposed upon the working people. The intellectuals who are accustomed to serving the capitalists and the capitalist state say in order to console themselves: "You cannot do without us." But their insolent assumption has no truth in it; educated men are already making their appearance on the side of the people, on the side of the working people, and are helping to break the resistance of the servants of capital. There are a great many talented organisers among the peasants and the working class, and they are only just beginning to become aware of themselves, to awaken, to stretch out towards great, vital, creative work, to tackle with their own forces the task of building socialist society.

One of the most important tasks today, if not the most important, is to develop this independent initiative of the workers, and of all the working and exploited people generally, develop it as widely as possible in creative *organisational* work. At all costs we must break the old, *absurd*, savage, despicable and disgusting prejudice that only the so-called "upper classes", only the rich, and those who have gone through the school of the rich, are capable of administering the state and directing the organisational development of socialist society.

This is a prejudice fostered by rotten routine, by petrified views, slavish habits, and still more by the sordid selfishness of the capitalists, in whose interest it is to administer while plundering and to plunder while administering. The workers will not forget for a moment that they need the power of knowledge. The extraordinary striving after knowledge which the workers reveal, particularly now, shows that mistaken ideas about this

do not and cannot exist among the proletariat. But every *rank-and-file* worker and peasant who can read and write, who can judge people and has practical experience, is capable of *organizational* work. Among the "common people", of whom the bourgeois intellectuals speak with such haughtiness and contempt, there are *many* such men and women. This sort of talent among the working class and the peasants is a rich and still untapped source.

The workers and peasants are still "timid", they have not yet become accustomed to the idea that *they* are now the *ruling* class; they are not yet resolute enough. The revolution could not *at one stroke* instil these qualities into millions and millions of people who all their lives had been compelled by want and hunger to work under the threat of the stick. But the Revolution of October 1917 is strong, viable and invincible because it *awakens* these qualities, breaks down the old impediments, removes the worn-out shackles, and leads the working people on to the road of the *independent* creation of a new life.

Accounting and control—this is the *main* economic task of every Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, of every consumers' society, of every union or committee of supplies, of every factory committee or organ of workers' control in general.

We must fight against the old habit of regarding the measure of labour and the means of production, from the point of view of the slave whose sole aim is to lighten the burden of labour or to obtain at least some little bit *from the bourgeoisie*. The advanced, class-conscious workers have already started this fight, and they are offering determined resistance to the newcomers who flocked to the factory world in particularly large numbers during the war and who now would like to treat the *people's* factory, the factory that has come into the possession of the people, in the old way, with the sole aim of "snatching the biggest possible piece of the pie and clearing out". All the class-conscious, honest and thinking peasants and working people will take their place in this fight by the side of the advanced workers.

Accounting and control, *if* carried on by the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the supreme state power, or on the instructions, on the authority, of *this* power—widespread, general, universal accounting and control, the accounting and control of the amount of labour performed and of the distribution of products—is the *essence* of socialist transformation, once the political rule of the proletariat has been established and secured.

The accounting and control essential for the transition to socialism can be exercised only by the people. Only the voluntary

and conscientious co-operation of the *mass* of the workers and peasants in accounting and controlling *the rich, the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies*, a co-operation marked by revolutionary enthusiasm, can conquer these survivals of accursed capitalist society, these dregs of humanity, these hopelessly decayed and atrophied limbs, this contagion, this plague, this ulcer that socialism has inherited from capitalism.

Workers and peasants, working and exploited people! The land, the banks and the factories have now become the property of the entire people! You *yourselves* must set to work to take account of and control the production and distribution of products—this, and this *alone* is the road to the victory of socialism, the only guarantee of its victory, the guarantee of victory over all exploitation, over all poverty and want! For there is enough bread, iron, timber, wool, cotton and flax in Russia to satisfy the needs of everyone, if only labour and its products are properly distributed, if only a *business-like, practical* control over this distribution by the entire people is established, provided only we can defeat the enemies of the people: the rich and their hangers-on, and the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies, *not only* in politics, but also in *everyday economic* life.

No mercy for these enemies of the people, the enemies of socialism, the enemies of the working people! War to the death against the rich and their hangers-on, the bourgeois intellectuals; war on the rogues, the idlers and the rowdies! All of them are of the same brood—the spawn of capitalism, the offspring of aristocratic and bourgeois society; the society in which a handful of men robbed and insulted the people; the society in which poverty and want forced thousands and thousands on to the path of rowdyism, corruption and roguery, and caused them to lose all human semblance; the society which inevitably cultivated in the working man the desire to escape exploitation even by means of deception, to wriggle out of it, to escape, if only for a moment, from loathsome labour, to procure at least a crust of bread by any possible means, at any cost, so as not to starve, so as to subdue the pangs of hunger suffered by himself and by his near ones.

The rich and the rogues are two sides of the same coin, they are the two principal categories of *parasites* which capitalism fostered; they are the principal enemies of socialism. These enemies must be placed under the special surveillance of the entire people; they must be ruthlessly punished for the slightest violation of the laws and regulations of socialist society. Any display of weakness, hesitation or sentimentality in this respect would be an immense crime against socialism.

In order to render these parasites harmless to socialist society we must organise the accounting and control of the amount of work done and of production and distribution by the entire people, by millions and millions of workers and peasants, participating voluntarily, energetically and with revolutionary enthusiasm. And in order to organise this accounting and control, which is *fully within the ability* of every honest, intelligent and efficient worker and peasant, we must rouse their organising talent, the talent that is to be found in their midst; we must rouse among them—and organise on a national scale—*competition* in the sphere of organisational achievement; the workers and peasants must be brought to see clearly the difference between the necessary advice of an educated man and the necessary control by the “common” worker and peasant of the *slovenliness* that is so usual among the “educated”.

This slovenliness, this carelessness, untidiness, unpunctuality, nervous haste, the inclination to substitute discussion for action, talk for work, the inclination to undertake everything under the sun without finishing anything, are characteristics of the “educated”; and this is not due to the fact that they are bad by nature, still less is it due to their evil will; it is due to all their habits of life, the conditions of their work, to fatigue, to the abnormal separation of mental from manual labour, and so on, and so forth.

Among the mistakes, shortcomings and defects of our revolution a by no means unimportant place is occupied by the mistakes, etc., which are due to these deplorable—but at present inevitable—characteristics of the intellectuals in our midst, and to the *lack* of sufficient supervision by the *workers* over the *organisational* work of the intellectuals.

The workers and peasants are still “timid”; they must get rid of this timidity, and they *certainly* will get rid of it. We cannot dispense with the advice, the instruction of educated people, of intellectuals and specialists. Every sensible worker and peasant understands this perfectly well, and the intellectuals in our midst cannot complain of a lack of attention and comradely respect on the part of the workers and peasants. Advice and instruction, however, is one thing, and the organisation of *practical* accounting and control is another. Very often the intellectuals give excellent advice and instruction, but they prove to be ridiculously, *absurdly*, shamefully “unhandy” and incapable of *carrying out* this advice and instruction, of exercising *practical control* over the translation of words into deeds.

In this very respect it is utterly impossible to dispense with the help and the *leading role* of the practical organisers from among the “people”, from among the factory workers and working peasants. “It is not the gods who make pots”—this is the truth that

the workers and peasants should get well drilled into their minds. They must understand that the whole thing now is *practical work*; that the historical moment has arrived when theory is being transformed into practice, vitalised by practice, corrected by practice, tested by practice; when the words of Marx, "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes",<sup>223</sup> become particularly true—every step in really curbing in practice, restricting, fully registering the rich and the rogues and keeping them under control is worth more than a dozen excellent arguments about socialism. For "theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life".<sup>224</sup>

Competition must be arranged between practical organisers from among the workers and peasants. Every attempt to establish stereotyped forms and to impose uniformity from above, as intellectuals are so inclined to do, must be combated. Stereotyped forms and uniformity imposed from above have nothing in common with democratic and socialist centralism. The unity of essentials, of fundamentals, of the substance, is not disturbed but ensured by *variety* in details, in specific local features, in methods of *approach*, in *methods* of exercising control, in *ways* of exterminating and rendering harmless the parasites (the rich and the rogues, slovenly and hysterical intellectuals, etc., etc.).

The Paris Commune gave a great example of how to combine initiative, independence, freedom of action and vigour from below with voluntary centralism free from stereotyped forms. Our Soviets are following the same road. But they are still "timid"; they have not yet got into their stride, have not yet "bitten into" their new, great, creative task of building the socialist system. The Soviets must set to work more boldly and display greater initiative. All "communes"—factories, villages, consumers' societies, and committees of supplies—must *compete* with each other as practical organisers of accounting and control of labour and distribution of products. The programme of this accounting and control is simple, clear and intelligible to all—everyone to have bread; everyone to have sound footwear and good clothing; everyone to have warm dwellings; everyone to work conscientiously; not a single rogue (including those who shirk their work) to be allowed to be at liberty, but kept in prison, or serve his sentence of compulsory labour of the hardest kind; not a single rich man who violates the laws and regulations of socialism to be allowed to escape the fate of the rogue, which should, in justice, be the fate of the rich man. "He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—this is the *practical* commandment of socialism. This is how things should be organised *practically*. These are the *practical* successes our "communes" and our worker and peasant organisers should be proud of. And this applies particularly to the

organisers among the intellectuals (*particularly*, because they are *too much, far too much* in the habit of being proud of their general instructions and resolutions).

Thousands of practical forms and methods of accounting and controlling the rich, the rogues and the idlers must be devised and put to a practical test by the communes themselves, by small units in town and country. Variety is a guarantee of effectiveness here, a pledge of success in achieving the single common aim—to *clean* the land of Russia of all vermin, of fleas—the rogues, of bugs—the rich, and so on and so forth. In one place half a score of rich, a dozen rogues, half a dozen workers who shirk their work (in the manner of rowdies, the manner in which many compositors in Petrograd, particularly in the Party printing-shops, shirk their work) will be put in prison. In another place they will be put to cleaning latrines. In a third place they will be provided with “yellow tickets” after they have served their time, so that everyone shall keep an eye on them, as *harmful* persons, until they reform. In a fourth place, one out of every ten idlers will be shot on the spot. In a fifth place mixed methods may be adopted, and by probational release, for example, the rich, the bourgeois intellectuals, the rogues and rowdies who are corrigible will be given an opportunity to reform quickly. The more variety there will be, the better and richer will be our general experience, the more certain and rapid will be the success of socialism, and the easier will it be for practice to devise—for only practice can devise—the *best* methods and means of struggle.

In what commune, in what district of a large town, in what factory and in what village are there *no* starving people, *no* unemployed, *no* idle rich, *no* despicable lackeys of the bourgeoisie, saboteurs who call themselves intellectuals? Where has most been done to raise the productivity of labour, to build good new houses for the poor, to put the poor in the houses of the rich, to regularly provide a bottle of milk for every child of every poor family? It is on these points that *competition* should develop between the communes, communities, producer-consumers’ societies and associations, and Soviets of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies. This is the work in which *talented organisers* should come to the fore *in practice* and be promoted to work in state administration. There is a great deal of talent among the people. It is merely suppressed. It must be given an opportunity to display itself. It *and it alone*, with the support of the people, can save Russia and save the cause of socialism.

Written December 24 27, 1917  
(January 6 9, 1918)

First published in *Pravda* No 17,  
January 20, 1929  
Signed *U Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 404 15

---

## DECLARATION OF RIGHTS OF THE WORKING AND EXPLOITED PEOPLE<sup>225</sup>

- I. The Constituent Assembly resolves:
1. Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power, centrally and locally, is vested in these Soviets.
  2. The Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics.
- II. Its fundamental aim being to abolish all exploitation of man by man, to completely eliminate the division of society into classes, to mercilessly crush the resistance of the exploiters, to establish a socialist organisation of society and to achieve the victory of socialism in all countries, the Constituent Assembly further resolves:
1. Private ownership of land is hereby abolished. All land together with all buildings, farm implements and other appurtenances of agricultural production, is proclaimed the property of the entire working people.
  2. The Soviet laws on workers' control and on the Supreme Economic Council are hereby confirmed for the purpose of guaranteeing the power of the working people over the exploiters and as a first step towards the complete conversion of the factories, mines, railways, and other means of production and transport into the property of the workers' and peasants' state.
  3. The conversion of all banks into the property of the workers' and peasants' state is hereby confirmed as one of the conditions for the emancipation of the working people from the yoke of capital.
  4. For the purpose of abolishing the parasitic sections of society, universal labour conscription is hereby instituted

5. To ensure the sovereign power of the working people, and to eliminate all possibility of the restoration of the power of the exploiters, the arming of the working people, the creation of a socialist Red Army of workers and peasants and the complete disarming of the propertied classes are hereby decreed.

III. 1. Expressing its firm determination to wrest mankind from the clutches of finance capital and imperialism, which have in this most criminal of wars drenched the world in blood, the Constituent Assembly whole-heartedly endorses the policy pursued by Soviet power of denouncing the secret treaties, organising most extensive fraternisation with the workers and peasants of the armies in the war, and achieving at all costs, by revolutionary means, a democratic peace between the nations, without annexations and indemnities and on the basis of the free self-determination of nations.

2. With the same end in view, the Constituent Assembly insists on a complete break with the barbarous policy of bourgeois civilisation, which has built the prosperity of the exploiters belonging to a few chosen nations on the enslavement of hundreds of millions of working people in Asia, in the colonies in general, and in the small countries.

The Constituent Assembly welcomes the policy of the Council of People's Commissars in proclaiming the complete independence of Finland, commencing the evacuation of troops from Persia, and proclaiming freedom of self-determination for Armenia.<sup>226</sup>

3. The Constituent Assembly regards the Soviet law on the cancellation of the loans contracted by the governments of the tsar, the landowners and the bourgeoisie as a first blow struck at international banking, finance capital, and expresses the conviction that Soviet power will firmly pursue this path until the international workers' uprising against the yoke of capital has completely triumphed.

IV. Having been elected on the basis of party lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, when the people were not yet in a position to rise *en masse* against the exploiters, had not yet experienced the full strength of resistance of the latter in defence of their class privileges, and had not yet applied themselves in practice to the task of building socialist society, the Constituent Assembly considers that it would be fundamentally wrong, even formally, to put itself in opposition to Soviet power.

In essence the Constituent Assembly considers that now, when the people are waging the last fight against their exploiters, there can be no place for exploiters in any government body.



Power must be vested wholly and entirely in the working people and their authorised representatives—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

Supporting Soviet power and the decrees of the Council of People's Commissars, the Constituent Assembly considers that its own task is confined to establishing the fundamental principles of the socialist reconstruction of society.

At the same time, endeavouring to create a really free and voluntary, and therefore all the more firm and stable, union of the working classes of all the nations of Russia, the Constituent Assembly confines its own task to setting up the fundamental principles of a federation of Soviet Republics of Russia, while leaving it to the workers and peasants of each nation to decide independently at their own authoritative Congress of Soviets whether they wish to participate in the federal government and in the other federal Soviet institutions, and on what terms

Written not later than  
January 3 (16) 1918

Published in *Pravda* No  
and *Izvestia* No 2  
January 4 (17) 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol 26,  
pp 423-25

---

## DRAFT DECREE ON THE DISSOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY<sup>227</sup>

### DRAFT DECREE

At its very inception, the Russian revolution produced the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies as the only mass organisation of all the working and exploited classes capable of leading the struggle of these classes for their complete political and economic emancipation.

During the whole of the initial period of the Russian revolution the Soviets multiplied in number, grew and gained strength and were taught by their own experience to discard the illusions of compromise with the bourgeoisie and to realise the deceptive nature of the forms of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary system; they arrived by practical experience at the conclusion that the emancipation of the oppressed classes was impossible unless they broke with these forms and with every kind of compromise. The break came with the October Revolution, which transferred the entire power to the Soviets.

The Constituent Assembly, elected on the basis of electoral lists drawn up prior to the October Revolution, was an expression of the old relation of political forces which existed when power was held by the compromisers and the Cadets. When the people at that time voted for the candidates of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, they were not in a position to choose between the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of the bourgeoisie, and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, the supporters of socialism. The Constituent Assembly, therefore, which was to have crowned the bourgeois parliamentary republic, was bound to become an obstacle in the path of the October Revolution and Soviet power.

The October Revolution, by giving power to the Soviets, and through the Soviets to the working and exploited classes, aroused the desperate resistance of the exploiters, and in the crushing of this resistance it fully revealed itself as the beginning of the

socialist revolution. The working classes learned by experience that the old bourgeois parliamentary system had outlived its purpose and was absolutely incompatible with the aim of achieving socialism, and that not national institutions, but only class institutions (such as the Soviets) were capable of overcoming the resistance of the propertied classes and of laying the foundations of socialist society. To relinquish the sovereign power of the Soviets, to relinquish the Soviet Republic won by the people, for the sake of the bourgeois parliamentary system and the Constituent Assembly, would now be a step backwards and would cause the collapse of the October workers' and peasants' revolution.

Owing to the above-mentioned circumstances, the Party of Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the party of Kerensky, Avksentyev and Chernov, obtained the majority in the Constituent Assembly which met on January 5. Naturally, this party refused to discuss the absolutely clear, precise and unambiguous proposal of the supreme organ of Soviet power, the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, to recognise the programme of Soviet power, to recognise the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People, to recognise the October Revolution and Soviet power. By this action the Constituent Assembly severed all ties with the Soviet Republic of Russia. It was inevitable that the Bolshevik group and the Left Socialist-Revolutionary group, who now patently constitute the overwhelming majority in the Soviets and enjoy the confidence of the workers and the majority of the peasants, should withdraw from such a Constituent Assembly.

The Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik parties are in fact carrying on outside the Constituent Assembly a most desperate struggle against Soviet power, calling openly in their press for its overthrow and describing as arbitrary and unlawful the crushing of the resistance of the exploiters by the forces of the working classes, which is essential in the interests of emancipation from exploitation. They are defending the saboteurs, the servants of capital, and are going as far as undisguised calls to terrorism, which certain "unidentified groups" have already begun. It is obvious that under such circumstances the remaining part of the Constituent Assembly could only serve as a screen for the struggle of the counter-revolutionaries to overthrow Soviet power.

Accordingly, the Central Executive Committee resolves that the Constituent Assembly is hereby dissolved.

---

## ON THE HISTORY OF THE QUESTION OF THE UNFORTUNATE PEACE

It might be argued that this is no time to deal with history. Certainly, this kind of assertion would be permissible if a particular question from the past were not inseparably and directly connected in practice with the present. The question of the unfortunate peace, the exceptionally harsh peace, is, however, such a burning question that it calls for elucidation. I am therefore publishing my theses on this subject that were read at a meeting of about sixty of the leading Petrograd Party functionaries on January 8, 1918.

Here are these theses:

January 7, 1918

### THESES ON THE QUESTION OF THE IMMEDIATE CONCLUSION OF A SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE<sup>228</sup>

1. The position of the Russian revolution at the present moment is such that nearly all the workers and the vast majority of the peasants undoubtedly side with Soviet power and the socialist revolution which it has started. To that extent the socialist revolution in Russia is assured.

2. At the same time, the civil war, provoked by the frantic resistance of the wealthy classes, who realise full well that they are faced with the last and decisive fight for the preservation of private ownership of the land and means of production, has not yet reached its climax. The victory of Soviet power in this war is assured, but some time must inevitably elapse, no little exertion of effort will inevitably be required, a certain period of acute

economic dislocation and chaos, which accompany all wars, and civil war in particular, is inevitable, before the resistance of the bourgeoisie is crushed.

3. Furthermore, this resistance, in its less active and non-military forms—sabotage, the hire of declassed elements and agents of the bourgeoisie, who worm their way into the ranks of the socialists in order to ruin their cause, and so on and so forth—has proved so stubborn and capable of assuming such diversified forms, that the fight against it will inevitably require some more time, and, in its main forms, is hardly likely to end until several months have passed. And unless this passive and covert resistance of the bourgeoisie and its supporters is definitely crushed, the socialist revolution cannot succeed.

4. Lastly, the organisational problems of the socialist transformation of Russia are so immense and difficult that their solution—in view of the numerous petty-bourgeois fellow-travellers of the socialist proletariat, and of the latter's low cultural level—will also require a fairly long time.

5. All these circumstances taken together are such as to make it perfectly clear that for the success of socialism in Russia a certain amount of time, several months at least, will be necessary, during which the hands of the socialist government must be absolutely free to achieve victory over the bourgeoisie first in our own country and to launch far-reaching mass organisational work on a wide scale.

6. The position of the socialist revolution in Russia must form the basis of any definition of the international tasks of our Soviet power, for the international situation in the fourth year of the war is such that it is quite impossible to predict the probable moment of outbreak of revolution and overthrow of any of the European imperialist governments (including the German). That the socialist revolution in Europe must come, and will come, is beyond doubt. All our hopes for the *final* victory of socialism are founded on this certainty and on this scientific prognosis. Our propaganda activities in general, and the organisation of fraternisation in particular, must be intensified and extended. It would be a mistake, however, to base the tactics of the Russian socialist government on attempts to determine whether or not the European, and especially the German socialist revolution will take place in the next six months (or some such brief period). Inasmuch as it is quite impossible to determine this, all such attempts, objectively speaking, would be nothing but a blind gamble.

7. The peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk have by now—January 7, 1918—made it perfectly clear that the war party has undoubtedly gained the upper hand in the German Government

(which has the other governments of the Quadruple Alliance at its beck and call) and has virtually already presented Russia with an ultimatum (and it is to be expected, most certainly to be expected, that any day now it will be presented formally). The ultimatum is as follows: either the continuation of the war, or a peace with annexations, i.e., peace on condition that we surrender all the territory we have occupied, while the Germans retain *all* the territory they have occupied and impose upon us an indemnity (outwardly disguised as payment for the maintenance of prisoners)—an indemnity of about three thousand million *rubles*, payable over a number of years.

8. The socialist government of Russia is faced with the question—a question whose solution brooks no delay—of whether to accept this peace with annexations now, or to immediately wage a revolutionary war. In fact, no middle course is possible. No further postponement can now be achieved, for we have *already* done everything possible and impossible to deliberately protract the negotiations.

9. On examining the arguments in favour of an immediate revolutionary war, the first argument we encounter is that a separate peace at this juncture would, objectively speaking, be an agreement with the German imperialists, an “imperialistic deal”, and so forth, and that, consequently, such a peace would mean a complete break with the fundamental principles of proletarian internationalism.

This argument, however, is obviously incorrect. Workers who lose a strike and sign terms for the resumption of work which are unfavourable to them and favourable to the capitalists, do not betray socialism. The only people who betray socialism are those who secure advantages for a section of the workers in exchange for profit to the capitalists; only such agreements are impermissible in principle.

He betrays socialism who calls the war with German imperialism a defensive and just war, but actually receives support from the Anglo-French imperialists, and conceals secret treaties concluded with them from the people. He does not in the least betray socialism who, without concealing anything from the people, and without concluding any secret treaties with the imperialists, agrees to sign terms of peace which are unfavourable to the weak nation and favourable to the imperialists of one group, if at that moment there is no strength to continue the war.

10. Another argument in favour of immediate war is that, by concluding peace, we objectively become agents of German imperialism, for we afford it the opportunity to release troops from our front, we surrender to it millions of prisoners of war, and so on. But this argument too is manifestly incorrect, for a

revolutionary war at the present juncture would, objectively speaking, make us agents of Anglo-French imperialism, by providing it with forces which would promote its aims. The British bluntly offered our Commander-in-Chief, Krylenko, one hundred rubles per month for every one of our soldiers provided we continued the war. Even if we did not take a single kopek from the Anglo-French, we nevertheless would be helping them, objectively speaking, by diverting part of the German army.

From that point of view, in neither case would we be entirely escaping some sort of imperialist bond, and it is obvious that it is impossible to escape it completely without overthrowing world imperialism. The correct conclusion from this is that the moment a socialist government triumphed in any one country, questions must be decided, not from the point of view of whether this or that imperialism is preferable, but exclusively from the point of view of the conditions which best make for the development and consolidation of the socialist revolution which has already begun.

In other words, the underlying principle of our tactics must not be, which of the two imperialisms it is more profitable to aid at this juncture, but rather, how the socialist revolution can be most firmly and reliably ensured the possibility of consolidating itself, or, at least, of maintaining itself in one country until it is joined by other countries.

11. It is said that the German Social-Democratic opponents of the war have now become "defeatists" and are requesting us not to yield to German imperialism. But we recognised defeatism only in respect of *one's own* imperialist bourgeoisie, and we always discountenanced victory over an alien imperialism, victory attained in formal or actual alliance with a "friendly" imperialism, as a method impermissible in principle and generally wrong.

This argument is therefore only a modification of the previous one. If the German Left Social-Democrats were proposing that we delay concluding a separate peace for a *definite* period, and guaranteed revolutionary action in Germany within this period, the question *might* assume a different aspect for us. Far from saying this, however, the German Lefts formally declare: "Hold out as long as you can, but decide the question from the point of view of the state of affairs in the *Russian* socialist revolution, for we cannot promise you anything positive regarding the German revolution."

12. It is said that in a number of Party statements we actually "promised" a revolutionary war, and that by concluding a separate peace we would be going back on our word.

That is not true. We said that in the era of imperialism a socialist government *had* to “*prepare for and wage*” a revolutionary war”; we said this in order to combat abstract pacifism and the theory that “defence of the fatherland” must be completely rejected in the era of imperialism, and, lastly, to combat the purely selfish instincts of a part of the soldiers, but we never gave any pledge to start a revolutionary war without considering whether it is possible to wage it at a given moment.

Unquestionably, even at this juncture we must *prepare* for a revolutionary war. We are carrying out this promise, as we have, in general, carried out all our promises that could be carried out at once: we annulled the secret treaties, offered all peoples a fair peace, and several times did our best to drag out peace negotiations so as to give other peoples a chance to join us.

But the question whether it is possible to carry on a revolutionary war *now, immediately*, must be decided exclusively from the point of view of whether material conditions permit it, and of the interests of the socialist revolution which has already begun.

13. Summing up the arguments in favour of an immediate revolutionary war, we have to conclude that such a policy might perhaps answer the human yearning for the beautiful, dramatic and striking, but that it would totally disregard the objective balance of class forces and material factors at the present stage of the socialist revolution now under way.

14. There can be no doubt that our army is absolutely in no condition at the present moment, and will not be for the next few weeks (and probably for the next few months), to beat back a German offensive successfully; firstly, owing to the extreme fatigue and exhaustion of the majority of the soldiers, coupled with the incredible chaos in the matter of food supply, replacement of the overfatigued, etc.; secondly, owing to the utter unfitness of the horses and the consequent inevitable ruin of our artillery; and, thirdly, owing to the absolute impossibility of defending the coastline from Riga to Revel, which affords the enemy a very certain chance of seizing the rest of Lifland, and then Estland, and of outflanking a large part of our forces, and finally, of capturing Petrograd.

15. Further, there is not the slightest doubt that the peasant majority of our army would at the present juncture unreservedly declare in favour of a peace with annexations and not in favour of an immediate revolutionary war; the socialist reorganisation of the army, the merging of the Red Guard detachments with it, and so on, have only just begun.



With the army completely democratised, to carry on war in defiance of the wishes of the majority of the soldiers would be a reckless gamble, while to create a really staunch and ideologically stable socialist workers' and peasants' army will, at the very least, require months and months.

16. The poor peasants in Russia are capable of supporting the socialist revolution led by the working class, but they are not capable of agreeing to fight a serious revolutionary war immediately, at the present juncture. To ignore the objective balance of class forces on this issue would be a fatal error.

17. Consequently, the situation at present with regard to a revolutionary war is as follows:

If the German revolution were to break out and triumph in the coming three or four months, the tactics of an immediate revolutionary war might perhaps not ruin our socialist revolution.

If, however, the German revolution does not occur in the next few months, the course of events, if the war is continued, will inevitably be such that grave defeats will compel Russia to conclude an even more disadvantageous separate peace, a peace, moreover, which would be concluded, not by a socialist government, but by some other (for example, a bloc of the bourgeois Rada and Chernov's followers, or something similar). For the peasant army, which is exhausted to the limit by the war, will after the very first defeats—and very likely within a matter of weeks, and not of months—overthrow the socialist workers' government.

18. This being the state of affairs, it would be absolutely impermissible tactics to stake the fate of the socialist revolution, which has already begun in Russia, merely on the chance that the German revolution may begin in the immediate future, within a matter of weeks. Such tactics would be a reckless gamble. We have no right to take such risks.

19. The German revolution will by no means be made more difficult of accomplishment as far as its objective premises are concerned, if we conclude a separate peace. Probably chauvinist intoxication will weaken it for a time, but Germany's position will remain extremely grave, the war with Britain and America will be a protracted one, and aggressive imperialism will be fully and completely exposed on both sides. A socialist Soviet Republic in Russia will stand as a living example to the peoples of all countries, and the propaganda and revolutionising effect of this example will be immense. There—the bourgeois system and a fully exposed predatory war between two groups of marauders. Here—peace and a socialist Soviet Republic.

20. In concluding a separate peace we free ourselves *as much as is possible at the present moment* from both hostile imperial-

ist groups, we take advantage of their mutual enmity and warfare which hamper concerted action on their part against us, and for a certain period have our hands free to advance and to consolidate the socialist revolution. The reorganisation of Russia on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the nationalisation of the banks and large-scale industry, coupled with *exchange of products* in kind between the towns and the small-peasant consumers' societies, is quite feasible economically, provided we are assured a few months in which to work in peace. And such a reorganisation will render socialism invincible both in Russia and all over the world, and at the same time will create a solid economic basis for a mighty workers' and peasants' Red Army.

21. A really revolutionary war at this juncture would be a war waged by a socialist republic against the bourgeois countries, with the aim—an aim clearly defined and fully approved by the socialist army—of overthrowing the bourgeoisie in other countries. However, we *obviously* cannot set ourselves this aim at the *present* moment. Objectively, we would be fighting now for the liberation of Poland, Lifland and Courland. But no Marxist, without renouncing the principles of Marxism and of socialism generally, can deny that the interests of socialism are higher than the interests of the right of nations to self-determination. Our socialist republic has done all it could, and continues to do all it can to give effect to the right to self-determination of Finland, the Ukraine, etc. But if the concrete situation is such that the existence of the socialist republic is being imperilled at the present moment on account of the violation of the right to self-determination of several nations (Poland, Lifland, Courland, etc.), naturally the preservation of the socialist republic has the higher claim.

Consequently, whoever says, "We cannot sign a humiliating, atrocious, etc., peace, betray Poland, and so forth", does not realise that by concluding peace on the condition that Poland is liberated, he would only be strengthening German imperialism against Britain, Belgium, Serbia and other countries *still further*. Peace on the condition of the liberation of Poland, Lifland and Courland would be a "patriotic" peace *from the point of view of Russia*, but would by no means cease to be a peace *with the annexationists*, with the German imperialists.

January 21, 1918. The following should be added to the above theses:

22. The mass strikes in Austria and Germany, and, subsequently, the formation of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies in

Berlin and Vienna, and, lastly, beginning from January 18-20, armed clashes and street fighting in Berlin—all this should be regarded as evidence of the fact that the revolution in Germany has begun.

This fact offers us the opportunity, for the time being, of further delaying and dragging out the peace negotiations.

Written—the Theses on January 7 (20)  
Thesis 22 on January 21 (February 3)  
introduction prior to February 11 (24)  
1918

Published without Thesis 22 in *Pravda* No 34  
February 24 (11) 1918  
Signed *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works* Vol 26,  
pp 442-50

Thesis 22 first published in 1949  
in the fourth Russian edition of  
*Lenin's Collected Works*, Vol 26

---

## AFTERWORD TO THE THESES ON THE QUESTION OF THE IMMEDIATE CONCLUSION OF A SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE

I read the above Theses to a small private meeting of Party functionaries on January 8, 1918. The discussion on them showed three opinions in the Party on this question—about a half those present spoke in favour of revolutionary war (this was sometimes called the “Moscow” point of view because the Moscow Regional Bureau of our Party adopted it earlier than other organisations); then about a quarter were for Comrade Trotsky who proposed to “declare the cessation of hostilities, demobilise the army, send the soldiers home but refrain from signing a treaty”, and, lastly, about a quarter supported me.

The state of affairs now obtaining in the Party reminds me very strongly of the situation in the summer of 1907 when the overwhelming majority of the Bolsheviks favoured the boycott of the Third Duma and I stood side by side with Dan in favour of participation and was subjected to furious attacks for my opportunism. Objectively, the present issue is a complete analogy; as then, the majority of the Party functionaries, proceeding from the very best revolutionary motives and the best Party traditions, allow themselves to be carried away by a “flash” slogan and *do not grasp the new* socio-economic and political situation, do not take into consideration *the change in the conditions* that demands a speedy and abrupt change in tactics. The essence of my argument, today as then, is to make clear that Marxism demands the consideration of objective conditions and their changes, that the question must be presented concretely as applicable to those conditions, that the most significant change that has occurred is the foundation of the Russian Soviet Republic, and the preservation of the republic that has already begun the socialist revolution is most important to us and to the *international socialist movement*; that at the moment the slogan of revolutionary war proclaimed by Russia would either be an

empty phrase and an unsupported demonstration, or would be tantamount, objectively, to falling into the trap set for us by the imperialists, who wish to *inveigle* us into continuing the *imperialist* war while we are still a weak unit, so that the young Soviet Republic might be *crushed* as cheaply as possible.

"I stand by Lenin's old position," exclaimed one young Muscovite (youth is one of the greatest virtues distinguishing that group of speakers). And that same speaker reproached me for repeating the old arguments of the defencists about the improbability of a revolution in Germany.

The whole trouble is that the Muscovites want to stick to the old *tactical* position, and stubbornly refuse to see the *change* that has taken place, the *new objective* situation that has arisen.

The Muscovites, in their zealous repetition of old slogans, have not even taken into consideration the fact that we Bolsheviks have now all become defencists. Having overthrown the bourgeoisie, having denounced and exposed the secret treaties, having proposed peace to all peoples, actually...<sup>\*</sup>

Written between January 8  
and 11 (21 and 24), 1918

First published in 1929  
in *Lenin Miscellany XI*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 26,  
pp. 451-52

---

**SPEECHES ON WAR AND PEACE  
AT A MEETING  
OF THE C.C. OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (B.)  
JANUARY 11 (24), 1918<sup>229</sup>**

**MINUTES**

**1**

Comrade Lenin speaks first and points out that at the meeting on January 8 (21) three standpoints were brought out on this question, and asks whether the question should be discussed point by point on the theses he put forward, or whether a general discussion should be opened. The second alternative is adopted, and Comrade Lenin has the floor.

He begins by setting forth the three standpoints brought out at the previous meeting: (1) signing a separate annexationist peace, (2) waging a revolutionary war, and (3) proclaiming the war ended, demobilising the army, but not signing a peace treaty. At the previous meeting, the first standpoint received 15 votes, the second 32 and the third 16.

Comrade Lenin points out that the Bolsheviks have never renounced defence, but this defence and protection of the fatherland must have a definite, concrete context, which exists at the present time, namely, defence of the Socialist Republic against an extremely strong international imperialism. The question is only one of how we should defend our fatherland, the Socialist Republic. The army is excessively fatigued by the war; the horses are in such a state that in the event of an offensive we shall not be able to move the artillery; the Germans are holding such favourable positions on the islands in the Baltic that if they start an offensive they could take Revel and Petrograd with their bare hands. By continuing the war in such conditions, we shall greatly strengthen German imperialism, peace will have to be concluded just the same, but then the peace will be still worse because it is not we who will be concluding it. The peace we are now forced to conclude is undoubtedly an ignominious one, but if war begins, our government will be swept away and peace will be concluded by a different government. At present, we are relying not only on the proletariat but also on

the poor peasantry, which will abandon us if the war continues. Drawing out the war is in the interest of French, British and American imperialism, and proof of this, for example, is the offer made at Krylenko's headquarters by the Americans to pay 100 rubles for every Russian soldier. Those who take the standpoint of revolutionary war stress that we shall then be engaged in a civil war with German imperialism, and shall thereby awaken revolution in Germany. But Germany, after all, is still only pregnant with revolution, whereas we have already given birth to a quite healthy infant, the Socialist Republic, which we may kill if we start the war. We are in possession of a circular letter of the German Social-Democrats, there is information about the attitude to us of two trends in the Centre, of which one considers that we have been bought, and that the current events in Brest are a farce, with the actors playing out their parts. This section is attacking us for the armistice. The other section of the Kautskyites says that the personal honesty of the leaders of the Bolsheviks is beyond all doubt, but that the Bolsheviks' behaviour is a psychological riddle.<sup>230</sup> We don't know the opinion of the Left-wing Social-Democrats. The British workers are supporting our efforts for peace. Of course, the peace we conclude will be an ignominious one, but we need a breathing space in order to carry out social reforms (take transport alone); we need to consolidate ourselves, and this takes time. We need to complete the crushing of the bourgeoisie, but for this we need to have both our hands free. Once we have done this, we shall free both our hands, and then we should be able to carry on a revolutionary war against international imperialism. The echelons of the revolutionary volunteer army which have now been formed are the officers of our future army.

What Comrade Trotsky is proposing—an end to the war, refusal to sign a peace treaty and demobilisation of the army—is an international political demonstration. The only thing we achieve by withdrawing our troops is handing over the Estonian Socialist Republic to the Germans. It is said that by concluding peace we are giving a free hand to the Japanese and Americans, who will immediately occupy Vladivostok. By the time they have even reached Irkutsk, we shall have been able to strengthen our Socialist Republic. By signing a peace treaty we of course betray self-determined Poland, but we retain the Estonian Socialist Republic and win a chance to consolidate our gains. Of course, we make a turn to the right, which leads through a very dirty stable, but we must do it. If the Germans start an offensive, we shall be forced to sign any peace treaty, and then, of course, it will be worse. An indemnity of three thousand million is not too high a price for saving the Socialist Republic. By signing peace now, we give the broad masses a visual demonstration that the imperialists (of Germany,

Britain and France), having taken Riga and Baghdad, are continuing to fight, whereas we are developing, the Socialist Republic is developing.

## 2

Comrade Lenin points out that he is not in agreement on some points with his supporters Stalin and Zinoviev.<sup>231</sup> Of course, there is a mass movement in the West, but the revolution there has not yet begun. But if we were to alter our tactics because of that, we should be traitors to international socialism. He does not agree with Zinoviev that the conclusion of peace will for a time weaken the movement in the West. If we believe that the German movement can develop immediately, in the event of an interruption of the peace negotiations, then we must sacrifice ourselves, for the German revolution will have a force much greater than ours. But the whole point is that the movement there has not yet begun, but over here it already has a newborn and loudly shouting infant, and unless we now say clearly that we agree to peace, we shall perish. It is important for us to hold out until the general socialist revolution gets under way, but this we can only achieve by concluding peace.

## 3

Comrade Lenin motions a vote on the proposition that we drag out the signing of a peace treaty in every possible way.

First published in 1922  
in N. Lenin (V. Ulyanov),  
*Works*, Vol. XV  
the third speech published in 1929  
in *The Minutes of the C. C. of the*  
*R. S. D. L. P. August 1917-February 1918*  
Russian edition

*Collected Works*, Vol.  
pp. 467-70



---

# **THIRD ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', SOLDIERS' AND PEASANTS' DEPUTIES<sup>232</sup>**

*JANUARY 10-18 (23-31), 1918*

## **REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS JANUARY 11 (24)**

Comrades, on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars I must submit to you a report of its activities for the two months and fifteen days that have elapsed since the establishment of Soviet power and the Soviet Government in Russia.

Two months and fifteen days—that is only five days more than the preceding workers' power lasted and ruled over a whole country, or over the exploiters and the capitalists, the power of the Paris workers at the time of the Paris Commune of 1871.

We must first of all remember this workers' power, we must cast our minds back and compare it with the Soviet power that was formed on October 25. And if we compare the preceding dictatorship of the proletariat with the present one we shall see at once what a gigantic stride the international working-class movement has made, and in what an immeasurably more favourable position Soviet power in Russia finds itself, notwithstanding the incredibly complicated conditions of war and economic ruin.

After retaining power for two months and ten days, the workers of Paris, who for the first time in history established the Commune, the embryo of Soviet power, perished at the hands of the French Cadets, Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries of a Kaledin type. The French workers had to pay an unprecedentedly heavy price for the first experience of workers' government, the meaning and purpose of which the overwhelming majority of the peasants in France did not know.

We find ourselves in immeasurably more favourable circumstances because the Russian soldiers, workers and peasants were able to create the Soviet Government, an apparatus which informed the whole world of their methods of struggle. It is this that puts the Russian workers and peasants in a position that differs from the power of the Paris proletariat. They had no apparatus, the country did not understand them; we were imme-

diately able to rely on Soviet power, and that is why we never doubted that Soviet power enjoys the sympathy and the warmest and most devoted support of the overwhelming majority of the people, and that therefore Soviet power is invincible.

Those who were sceptical of Soviet power and frequently, either consciously or unconsciously, sold and betrayed it for compromise with the capitalists and the imperialists, raised a deafening clamour about the power of the proletariat alone not being able to be maintained in Russia. As if any Bolsheviks or their supporters forgot even for a moment that in Russia only that power could last for any length of time that would be able to unite the working class and the majority of the peasants, all the working and exploited classes, in a single, inseparably interconnected force fighting against the landowners and the bourgeoisie.

We never doubted that only the alliance of the workers and the poor peasants, the semi-proletarians, mentioned in our Party Programme, can, in Russia, embrace the majority of the population and ensure firm support for the government. And after October 25 we were immediately able, in the course of several weeks, to overcome all difficulties and establish a government on the basis of this firm alliance.

Yes, comrades! When the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, in its old form—when the peasants did not yet understand who in this party were real advocates of socialism—put forward the slogan of equalitarian land tenure, without caring who was to put it through, whether it was to be effected in alliance with the bourgeoisie or not, we branded that as a fraud. And this section, which has now realised that the people are not with it and that it is a bubble, claimed that it could carry out equalitarian land tenure in alliance with the bourgeoisie. In this lay the basic fraud. And when the Russian revolution presented an example of collaboration between the working people and the bourgeoisie, in the greatest moment in the life of the people; when the war had been ruining the people and dooming millions to death from starvation and its consequences showed what compromise meant in practice; when the Soviets themselves experienced it and felt it after having passed through the school of compromise, it became obvious that there was a sound, virile and great socialist core in the teachings of those who wanted to unite the working section of the peasants with the great socialist movement of the workers of the whole world.

And as soon as this became a clear and distinct practical question to the peasants, something happened of which no one had any doubt, as has now been proved by the Peasants' Soviets and Congresses: when the time came to implement socialism, the peasants were able to see clearly these two main political lines—alliance with the bourgeoisie, or alliance with the working people.

They then realised that the party which expressed the real aims and interests of the peasants was the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. And when we concluded our government alliance with this party, we, from the very outset, arranged it so that the alliance rested on the clearest and most obvious principles. If the peasants of Russia want to socialise the land in alliance with the workers who will nationalise the banks and establish workers' control, then they are our loyal colleagues, our most loyal and valuable allies. Comrades, no socialist would refuse to admit the obvious truth that between socialism and capitalism there lies a long, more or less difficult transitional period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the forms this period will take will be determined to a large extent by whether small or big ownership, small- or large-scale farming, predominates. It goes without saying that the transition to socialism in Estland, that small country in which the whole population is literate, and which consists of large-scale farms, cannot be the same as the transition to socialism in Russia, which is mainly a petty-bourgeois country. This must be taken into account.

Every politically-conscious socialist says that socialism cannot be imposed upon the peasants by force and that we must count only on the power of example and on the mass of the peasants assimilating day-to-day experience. How would the peasants prefer to pass to socialism? This is the problem which now confronts the Russian peasants in practice. How can they support the socialist proletariat and begin the transition to socialism? The peasants have already tackled this transition, and we have complete confidence in them.

The alliance we concluded with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries is built on a firm basis and is growing stronger and stronger by the hour. At first we on the Council of People's Commissars feared that factional struggle would hinder the work, but now, after the experience of two months' work together, I must say definitely that on the majority of questions we arrive at unanimous decisions.

We know that only when experience has shown the peasants, for example, the kind of exchange there must be between town and country they will themselves, from below, on the basis of their own experience, establish their own connections. On the other hand, the experience of the Civil War has demonstrated to the peasants that there is no other road to socialism except the dictatorship of the proletariat and the ruthless suppression of the rule of the exploiters. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, every time we touch upon this theme, at the present meeting, or in the Central Executive Committee, I, from time to time, hear from the Right side of the meeting the exclamation

"Dictator!" Yes, "when we were socialists" everyone recognised the dictatorship of the proletariat; they even wrote about it in their programmes, they were indignant at the widespread false idea that it was possible to persuade and prove to the population that the working people ought not to be exploited, that this was sinful and disgraceful, and that once people were persuaded of this there would be paradise on earth. No, this utopian notion was smashed in theory long ago, and now our task is to smash it in practice.

We must not depict socialism as if socialists will bring it to us on a plate all nicely dressed. That will never happen. Not a single problem of the class struggle has ever been solved in history except by violence. When violence is exercised by the working people, by the mass of exploited against the exploiters—then we are for it! (*Stormy applause.*) And we are not in the least disturbed by the howls of those people who consciously or unconsciously side with the bourgeoisie, or who are so frightened by them, so oppressed by their rule, that they have been flung into consternation at the sight of this unprecedentedly acute class struggle, have burst into tears, forgotten all their premises and demand that we perform the impossible, that we socialists achieve complete victory without fighting against the exploiters and without suppressing their resistance.

As far back as the summer of 1917 the exploiters understood that it is a matter of "the last and decisive battles", and that if the Soviets came to power the last bulwark of the bourgeoisie, their principal source for suppressing the working people, would be torn out of their hands.

That is why the October Revolution began this systematic and unswerving struggle to compel the exploiters to cease their resistance and to become reconciled to the idea, no matter how difficult that may be for even the best of them, that the rule of the exploiting classes has gone never to return, that from now on the ordinary peasant will give the orders and that they must obey, however unpleasant that may be.

This will entail many difficulties, sacrifices and mistakes; it is something new, unprecedented in history and cannot be studied from books. It goes without saying that this is the greatest and most difficult transition that has ever occurred in history; but there is no other way to make this great transition and the fact that Soviet power has been established in Russia has shown that it is the revolutionary people who are richest of all in revolutionary experience—when millions come to the assistance of a few score of Party people—the people who actually take their exploiters by the throat.

That is why civil war has acquired predominance in Russia at the present time. Against us is advanced the slogan: "Down with

civil war!" I happened to hear this shouted from the Right benches of the so-called Constituent Assembly. Down with civil war. . . . What does that mean? Civil war against whom? Against Kornilov, Kerensky and Ryabushinsky who are spending millions to bribe vagabonds and officials? Against the saboteurs who, consciously or unconsciously, are accepting these bribes? Undoubtedly, among the latter there are ignorant people who accept these bribes unconsciously, because they cannot even imagine that the old bourgeois system can and must be destroyed to the very foundation and that an entirely new, socialist society can and must be built up on its ruins. Undoubtedly there are people like that, but does that alter the situation?

That is why the representatives of the propertied classes are staking their all, that is why these are the last and decisive battles for them, and they would stop at no crime in their efforts to smash Soviet power. Does not the whole history of socialism, particularly of French socialism, which is so rich in revolutionary striving, show us that when the working people themselves take power in their hands the ruling classes resort to unheard-of crimes and shootings if it is a matter of protecting their money-bags. When these people talk to us about civil war we answer them with ridicule; but when they spread their slogans among the students we say—you are deceiving them!

The class struggle did not accidentally assume its latest form, the form in which the exploited class takes all the means of power in its own hands in order to completely destroy its class enemy, the bourgeoisie, in order to sweep from the land of Russia not only the bureaucrats, but also the landowners, as the Russian peasants in several gubernias have done.

We are told that the sabotage with which the bureaucrats and the landowners met the Council of People's Commissars is an indication of their unwillingness to assist socialism, as if it were not clear that the whole of this gang of capitalists and swindlers, vagabonds and saboteurs, represent a single gang bribed by the bourgeoisie and resisting the power of the working people. Of course, those who thought that it was possible to leap straight from capitalism to socialism, or those who imagined that it was possible to convince the majority of the population that this could be achieved through the medium of the Constituent Assembly—those who believed in this bourgeois-democratic fable, can go on blithely believing it, but let them not complain if life destroys this fable.

Those who have come to understand what the class struggle means, what the sabotage organised by the bureaucrats means, know that we cannot leap straight into socialism. There remained the bourgeoisie, capitalists, who hope to restore their rule and who

defend their money-bags. There remained vagabonds, a section of corrupt people who are absolutely downtrodden by capitalism and who are unable to grasp the idea of the proletarian struggle. There remained office employees, bureaucrats who believe that it is in the interests of society to protect the old system. How can anyone imagine that the victory of socialism can come about except by the complete collapse of these sections, except by the complete destruction of the Russian and European bourgeoisie? Do you think the Ryabushinskys do not understand their class interests? It is they who are paying the saboteurs not to work. Or do they operate disunited? Are they not operating in conjunction with the French, British and American capitalists by buying up securities? It remains to be seen whether they will get much out of these transactions. Will not the heaps of securities they are now buying up turn out to be merely useless heaps of scrap-paper?

That is why, comrades, our reply to all the reproaches and accusations hurled against us of employing terror, dictatorship, civil war, although we are far from having resorted to real terror, because we are stronger than they—we have the Soviets, it will be sufficient if we nationalise the banks and confiscate their property in order to compel them to submit—our reply to all these charges of instigating civil war is: yes, we have openly proclaimed what no other government has been able to proclaim. The first government in the world that can speak openly of civil war is the government of the workers, peasants and soldiers. Yes, we have started and we are waging civil war against the exploiters. The more straightforwardly we say this, the more quickly will this war come to an end, the more quickly will all the working and exploited people understand us, will understand that Soviet power is fighting for the real, vital cause of all the working people.

Comrades, I do not think we shall achieve victory in this struggle quickly, but we are very rich in experience: we have managed to achieve a great deal in the course of two months. We have experienced Kerensky's attempt to launch an attack against Soviet power and the complete failure of this attempt. We have experienced the organisation of power of the Ukrainian Kerenskys—the struggle has not yet ended there, but to anyone who has watched it, who has heard at least a few truthful reports from representatives of Soviet power, it is obvious that the bourgeois elements of the Ukrainian Rada are living their last days. (*Applause.*) There cannot be the slightest doubt about the victory of Soviet power, of the Ukrainian People's Republic, over the Ukrainian bourgeois Rada.

As for the struggle against Kaledin—here, indeed, everything rests on the basis of the exploitation of the working people, on the basis of the bourgeois dictatorship—if there is any social basis

at all against Soviet power. The Peasants' Congress has clearly demonstrated that Kaledin's cause is hopeless; the working people are against him. The experience of Soviet power, propaganda by deeds, by the example of the Soviet organisations, is having its effect, and Kaledin's stronghold in the Don Region is now collapsing—not so much externally as internally.

That is why, looking at the civil war front in Russia, we can say with complete conviction: here the victory of Soviet power is complete and absolutely assured. And, comrades, the victory of Soviet power is being achieved because right from the outset it began to realise the age-old aspirations of socialism, while consistently and determinedly relying on the people and considering it to be its duty to awaken the most oppressed and down-trodden sections of society to active life, to raise them to socialist creative work. That is why the old army with its barrack-square drilling and torture of soldiers has retreated into the past. It has been thrown on the scrap-heap, nothing remains of it. (*Applause.*) The complete democratisation of the army has been carried out.

Permit me to relate an incident that occurred when I was in the carriage of a Finnish train and I overheard a conversation between several Finns and an old woman. I could not take part in the conversation because I cannot speak Finnish. But one of the Finns turned to me and said: "Do you know the curious thing this old woman said? She said, 'Now there is no need to fear the man with the gun. I was in the woods one day and I met a man with a gun, and instead of taking the firewood I had collected from me, he added some more.'"

When I heard that, I said to myself: let the hundreds of newspapers, no matter what they call themselves—socialist, near-socialist, etc.—let hundreds of extremely loud voices shout at us, "dictators", "violators", and similar words. We know that another voice is now rising from among the people; they say to themselves: now we need not be afraid of the man with the gun because he protects the working people and will be ruthless in suppressing the rule of the exploiters. (*Applause.*) This is what the people have felt, and that is why the propaganda that simple and uneducated people are carrying on when they relate how the Red Guards are turning their might against the exploiters—that propaganda is invincible. It will spread among millions and tens of millions, and will firmly create what the French Commune of the nineteenth century began to create, but was able to continue for only a very short time because it was wrecked by the bourgeoisie—it will create a socialist Red Army, something all socialists have always aimed at, i.e., the general arming of the people. It will create new Red Guard cadres that will enable us to train the working people for the armed struggle.

It used to be said about Russia that she would be unable to fight because she would have no officers. But we must not forget what these very bourgeois officers said as they observed the workers fighting against Kerensky and Kaledin. They said: "The Red Guards' technical level is very low, but if these people had a little training they would have an invincible army." This is because, for the first time in the history of the world struggle, elements have entered the army which are not the vehicles of bureaucratic knowledge, but are guided by the idea of the struggle to emancipate the exploited. And when the work we have commenced is completed, the Russian Soviet Republic will be invincible. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the road which Soviet power has traversed insofar as concerns the socialist army has also been traversed insofar as concerns another instrument of the ruling classes, an even more subtle, an even more complicated instrument—the bourgeois court, which claimed to maintain order, but which, as a matter of fact, was a blind, subtle instrument for the ruthless suppression of the exploited, and an instrument for protecting the interests of the money-bags. Soviet power acted in the way all the proletarian revolutions had shown that it must act; it immediately threw the old court on to the scrap-heap. Let them shout that we, without reforming the old court, immediately threw it on to the scrap-heap. By that we paved the way for a real people's court, and not so much by the force of repressive measures as by massive example, the authority of the working people, without formalities; we transformed the court from an instrument of exploitation into an instrument of education on the firm foundations of socialist society. There is no doubt whatever that we cannot attain such a society at once.

These, then, are the main steps Soviet power has taken along the road indicated by the experience of the great popular revolutions throughout the world. There has not been a single revolution in which the working people did not begin to take some steps along this road in order to set up a new state power. Unfortunately, they only began to do this, but were unable to finish, they were unable to create the new type of state power. We have created it—we have already established a socialist Republic of Soviets.

I have no illusions about our having only just entered the period of *transition* to socialism, about not yet having reached socialism. But if you say that our state is a socialist Republic of Soviets, you will be right. You will be as right as those who call many Western bourgeois republics democratic republics although everybody knows that not one of even the most democratic of these republics is completely democratic. They grant scraps of democracy, they cut off tiny bits of the rights of the exploiters, but the working people are as much oppressed there as they are every-



where else. Nevertheless, we say that the bourgeois system is represented by both old monarchies and by constitutional republics.

And so in our case now. We are far from having completed even the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. We have never cherished the hope that we could finish it without the aid of the international proletariat. We never had any illusions on that score, and we know how difficult is the road that leads from capitalism to socialism. But it is our duty to say that our Soviet Republic is a socialist republic because we have taken this road, and our words will not be empty words.

We have initiated many measures undermining the capitalists' rule. We know that our power had to unite the activities of all our institutions by a single principle, and this principle we express in the words: "Russia is declared to be a Socialist Republic of Soviets." (*Applause.*) This will be that truth which rests on what we must do and have already begun to do, this will be the best unification of all our activities, the proclamation of our programme, a call to the working people and the exploited of all countries who either do not know at all what socialism is, or, what is worse, believe that socialism is the Chernov-Tsereteli mess of bourgeois reforms which we have tasted and tried during the ten months of the revolution and which we have become convinced is a falsification and not socialism.

And that is why "free" Britain and France did all they could during the ten months of our revolution to prevent a single copy of Bolshevik and Left Socialist-Revolutionary newspapers from entering their countries. They had to act in this way because they saw that the workers and peasants in all countries instinctively grasped what the Russian workers were doing. There was not a single meeting where news about the Russian revolution and the slogan of Soviet power was not hailed with stormy applause. The working people and the exploited everywhere have already come into conflict with their party top leadership. The old socialism of these leaders is not yet buried like that of Chkheidze and Tsereteli in Russia, but it is already done for in all countries of the world, it is already dead.

A new state—the Republic of Soviets, the republic of the working people, of the exploited classes that are breaking down the old bourgeois barriers, now stands against the old bourgeois system. New state forms have been created, which make it possible to suppress the exploiters, to overcome the resistance of this insignificant handful who are still strong because of yesterday's money-bags and yesterday's store of knowledge. They—the professors, teachers and engineers—transform their knowledge into an instrument for the exploitation of the working people, saying they want their knowledge to serve the bourgeoisie, otherwise they

refuse to work. But their power has been broken by the workers' and peasants' revolution, and a state is rising against them in which the people themselves freely elect their own representatives.

It is precisely at the present time that we can say that we really have an organisation of power which clearly indicates the transition to the complete abolition of any power, of any state. This will be possible when every trace of exploitation has been abolished, that is, in socialist society.

Now I shall deal briefly with the measures which the socialist Soviet Government of Russia has begun to realise. The nationalisation of the banks was one of the first measures adopted for the purpose, not only of wiping the landowners from the face of Russian earth, but also of eradicating the rule of the bourgeoisie and the possibility of capital oppressing millions and tens of millions of the working people. The banks are important centres of modern capitalist economy. They collect fantastic wealth and distribute it over this vast country; they are the nerve centres of capitalist life. They are subtle and intricate organisations, which grew up in the course of centuries; and against them were hurled the first blows of Soviet power which at first encountered desperate resistance in the State Bank. But this resistance did not deter Soviet power. We succeeded in the main thing in organising the State Bank; this main thing is in the hands of the workers and peasants. After these basic measures, which still require a lot of working out in detail, we proceeded to lay our hands on the private banks.

We did not act in the way the compromisers would probably have recommended us to do, i.e., first wait until the Constituent Assembly is convened, then perhaps draft a bill and introduce it in the Constituent Assembly and by that inform the bourgeoisie of our intentions and enable them to find a loophole through which to extricate themselves from this unpleasant thing; perhaps draw them into our company, and then make state laws—that would be a “state act”.

That would be the rejection of socialism. We acted quite simply; not fearing to call forth the reproaches of the “educated” people, or rather of the uneducated supporters of the bourgeoisie who were trading in the remnants of their knowledge, we said we had at our disposal armed workers and peasants. This morning they must occupy all the private banks. (*Applause.*) After they have done that, after power is in our hands, only after this, we shall discuss what measures to adopt. In the morning the banks were occupied and in the evening the Central Executive Committee issued a decree: “The banks are declared national property”—state control, the socialisation of banking, its transfer to Soviet power, took place.

There was not a man among us who could imagine that an intricate and subtle apparatus like banking, which grew out of the capitalist system of economy in the course of centuries, could be broken or transformed in a few days. We never said that. And when scientists, or pseudo-scientists, shook their heads and prophesied, we said: you can prophesy what you like. We know only one way for the proletarian revolution, namely, to occupy the enemy's positions—to learn to rule by experience, from our mistakes. We do not in the least belittle the difficulties in our path, but we have done the main thing. The source of capitalist wealth has been undermined in the place of its distribution. After all this, the repudiation of the state loans, the overthrow of the financial yoke, was a very easy step. The transition to confiscation of the factories, after workers' control had been introduced, was also very easy. When we were accused of breaking up production into separate departments by introducing workers' control, we brushed aside this nonsense. In introducing workers' control, we knew that it would take much time before it spread to the whole of Russia, but we wanted to show that we recognise only one road—changes from below; we wanted the workers themselves, from below, to draw up the new, basic economic principles. Much time will be required for this.

From workers' control we passed on to the creation of a Supreme Economic Council. Only this measure, together with the nationalisation of the banks and railways which will be carried out within the next few days, will make it possible for us to begin work to build up a new socialist economy. We know perfectly well the difficulties that confront us in this work; but we assert that only those who set to work to carry out this task relying on the experience and the instinct of the working people are socialists in deed. The people will commit many mistakes, but the main thing has been done. They know that when they appeal to Soviet power they will get whole-hearted support against the exploiters. There is not a single measure intended to ease their work that was not entirely supported by Soviet power. Soviet power does not know everything and cannot handle everything in time, and very often it is confronted with difficult tasks. Very often delegations of workers and peasants come to the government and ask, for example, what to do with such-and-such a piece of land. And frequently I myself have felt embarrassed when I saw that they had no very definite views. And I said to them: you are the power, do all you want to do, take all you want, we shall support you, but take care of production, see that production is useful. Take up useful work, you will make mistakes, but you will learn. And the workers have already begun to learn; they have already begun to fight against the saboteurs. Education has been turned into a

fence which hinders the advance of the working classes; it will be pulled down.

Undoubtedly, the war is corrupting people both in the rear and at the front; people who are working on war supplies are paid far above the rates, and this attracts all those who hid themselves to keep out of the war, the vagabond and semi-vagabond elements who are imbued with one desire, to "grab" something and clear out. But these elements are the worst that has remained of the old capitalist system and are the vehicles of all the old evils; these we must kick out, remove, and we must put in the factories all the best proletarian elements and form them into nuclei of future socialist Russia. This is not an easy task, it will give rise to many conflicts, to much friction and many clashes. We, the Council of People's Commissars, and I personally, have heard complaints and threats from them, but we have remained calm, knowing that now we have a judge to whom we can appeal. That judge is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. (*Applause.*) The word of this judge is indisputable, and we shall always rely upon it.

Capitalism deliberately differentiates the workers in order to rally an insignificant handful of the upper section of the working class around the bourgeoisie. Conflicts with this section are inevitable. We shall not achieve socialism without a struggle. But we are ready to fight, we have started it and we shall finish it with the aid of the apparatus called the Soviets. The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will easily solve any problem we bring before it. For however strong the group of privileged workers may be, when they are brought before the representative body of all the workers, then this court, I repeat, will be indisputable for them. This sort of adjustment is only just beginning. The workers and peasants have not yet sufficient confidence in their own strength; age-old tradition has made them far too used to waiting for orders from above. They have not yet fully appreciated the fact that the proletariat is the ruling class; there are still elements among them who are frightened and downtrodden and who imagine that they must pass through the despicable school of the bourgeoisie. This most despicable of bourgeois notions has remained alive longer than all the rest, but it is dying and will die out completely. And we are convinced that with every step Soviet power takes the number of people will constantly grow who have completely thrown off the old bourgeois notion that a simple worker and peasant cannot administer the state. Well, if he sets to doing it, he can and will learn! (*Applause.*)

And it will be our organisational task to select leaders and organisers from among the people. This enormous, gigantic work is now on the agenda. There could even be no thought of carrying

it out if it were not for Soviet power, a filtering apparatus which can promote people.

Not only have we a state law on control, we have something even far more valuable—attempts on the part of the proletariat to enter into agreements with the manufacturers' associations in order to guarantee the workers' management over whole branches of industry. Such an agreement has begun to be drawn up, and is almost completed, between the leather workers and the all-Russia leather manufacturers' society. I attach very special importance to these agreements,<sup>233</sup> they show that the workers are becoming aware of their strength.

Comrades, in my report I have not dealt with the particularly painful and difficult questions of peace and the food supply, because they are special items on the agenda and will be discussed separately.

My purpose in making this brief report was to show, as it appears to me and to the whole of the Council of People's Commissars, the entire history of what we have experienced during the past two and a half months, how the relation of class forces took shape in this new period of the Russian revolution, how a new state power was formed and what social tasks confront it.

Russia has started to achieve socialism in the right way—by the nationalisation of the banks and the transfer of all the land entirely to the working people. We are well aware of the difficulties that lie ahead, but we are convinced, by comparing our revolution with previous revolutions, that we shall achieve enormous successes and that we are on the road that guarantees complete victory.

And with us will go the masses of the more advanced countries, countries which have been divided by a predatory war, whose workers have passed through a longer period of training in democracy. When people depict the difficulties of our task, when we are told that the victory of socialism is possible only on a world scale, we regard this merely as an attempt, a particularly hopeless attempt, on the part of the bourgeoisie and of its voluntary and involuntary supporters to distort the irrefutable truth. The final victory of socialism in a single country is of course impossible. Our contingent of workers and peasants which is upholding Soviet power is one of the contingents of the great world army, which at present has been split by the world war, but which is striving for unity, and every piece of information, every fragment of a report about our revolution, every name, the proletariat greets with loud and sympathetic cheers, because it knows that in Russia the common cause is being pursued, the cause of the proletariat's uprising, the international socialist revolution. A living example, tackling the job somewhere in one country is more effective than

any proclamations and conferences; this is what inspires the working people in all countries.

The October strike in 1905—the first steps of the victorious revolution—immediately spread to Western Europe and then, in 1905, called forth the movement of the Austrian workers; already at that time we had a practical illustration of the value of the example of revolution, of the action by the workers in one country, and today we see that the socialist revolution is maturing by the hour in all countries of the world.

If we make mistakes and blunders and meet with obstacles on our way, that is not what is important to them; what is important to them is our example, that is what unites them. They say: we shall go together and conquer, come what may. (*Applause.*)

The great founders of socialism, Marx and Engels, having watched the development of the labour movement and the growth of the world socialist revolution for a number of decades, saw clearly that the transition from capitalism to socialism would require prolonged birth-pangs, a long period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the break-up of all that belonged to the past, the ruthless destruction of all forms of capitalism, the co-operation of the workers of all countries, who would have to combine their efforts to ensure complete victory. And they said that at the end of the nineteenth century “the Frenchman will begin it, and the German will finish it”<sup>234</sup>—the Frenchman would begin it because in the course of decades of revolution he had acquired that intrepid initiative in revolutionary action that made him the vanguard of the socialist revolution.

Today we see a different combination of international socialist forces. We say that it is easier for the movement to start in the countries that are not among those exploiting countries which have opportunities for easy plunder and are able to bribe the upper section of their workers. The pseudo-socialist, nearly all ministerial, Chernov-Tsereteli parties of Western Europe do not accomplish anything, and they lack firm foundations. We have seen the example of Italy; during the past few days we witnessed the heroic struggle of the Austrian workers against the predatory imperialists.<sup>235</sup> Though the pirates may succeed in holding up the movement for a time, they cannot stop it altogether, it is invincible.

The example of the Soviet Republic will stand before them for a long time to come. Our socialist Republic of Soviets will stand secure, as a torch of international socialism and as an example to all the working people. Over there—conflict, war, bloodshed, the sacrifice of millions of people, capitalist exploitation; here—a genuine policy of peace and a socialist Republic of Soviets.

Things have turned out differently from what Marx and Engels

expected and we, the Russian working and exploited classes, have the honour of being the vanguard of the international socialist revolution; we can now see clearly how far the development of the revolution will go. The Russian began it—the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will be victorious. (*Applause.*)

Published in *Izvestia* Nos. 8, 9 and 10  
January 19, 19 and 14, 1918

*Collected Works* vol. 26,  
pp. 43-72

---

## DRAFT WIRELESS MESSAGE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GERMAN REICH<sup>236</sup>

The Council of People's Commissars lodges a protest over the German Government's movement of troops against the Russian Soviet Republic, which had declared the state of war ended and had started to demobilise its army on all fronts. The Workers' and Peasants' Government of Russia could not have expected such a step, especially since neither of the parties to the armistice had, directly or indirectly, made any announcement either on February 10, or at any other time, that the armistice was at an end, as both parties to the treaty of December 2 (15), 1917 had undertaken to do.

The Council of People's Commissars finds itself forced, in the situation that has arisen, to declare its readiness formally to conclude peace on the terms the German Government demanded at Brest-Litovsk.

At the same time, the Council of People's Commissars expresses its readiness, if the German Government should formulate its precise peace terms, to reply within 12 hours whether or not these terms are acceptable.

Written on the night  
of February 18, 1918

Message published  
on February 19 (6),  
1918 in *Pravda* No. 30  
(evening issue)

*Collected Works* Vol. 26  
p. 525



---

## THE SOCIALIST FATHERLAND IS IN DANGER!<sup>237</sup>

In order to save this exhausted and ravaged country from new ordeals of war we decided to make a very great sacrifice and informed the Germans of our readiness to sign their terms of peace. Our truce envoys left Rezhitsa for Dvinsk in the evening on February 20 (7), *and still there is no reply*. The German Government is evidently in no hurry to reply. It obviously does not want peace. Fulfilling the task with which it has been charged by the capitalists of all countries, German militarism *wants to strangle the Russian and Ukrainian workers and peasants, to return the land to the landowners, the mills and factories to the bankers, and power to the monarchy*. The German generals want to establish their "order" in Petrograd and Kiev. *The Socialist Republic of Soviets is in gravest danger*. Until the proletariat of Germany rises and triumphs, it is the sacred duty of the workers and peasants of Russia devotedly to defend the Republic of Soviets against the hordes of bourgeois-imperialist Germany. The Council of People's Commissars resolves: (1) *The country's entire manpower and resources are placed entirely at the service of revolutionary defence*. (2) *All Soviets and revolutionary organisations are ordered to defend every position to the last drop of blood*. (3) Railway organisations and the Soviets associated with them must do their utmost to prevent the enemy from availing himself of the transport system; in the event of a retreat, they are to destroy the tracks and blow up or burn down the railway buildings; all rolling stock—carriages and locomotives—must be immediately dispatched eastward, into the interior of the country. (4) All grain and food stocks generally, as well as all valuable property in danger of falling into the enemy's hands, must be unconditionally destroyed; the duty of seeing that this is done is laid upon the local Soviets and their chairmen are made personally responsible. (5) The workers and peasants of Petrograd, Kiev, and of all towns, town-

ships, villages and hamlets along the line of the new front are to mobilise battalions to dig trenches, under the direction of military experts. (6) *These battalions are to include all able-bodied members of the bourgeois class, men and women, under the supervision of Red Guards; those who resist are to be shot.* (7) All publications which oppose the cause of revolutionary defence and side with the German bourgeoisie, or which endeavour to take advantage of the invasion of the imperialist hordes in order to overthrow Soviet rule, are to be suppressed; able-bodied editors and members of the staffs of such publications are to be mobilised for the digging of trenches or for other defence work. (8) *Enemy agents, profiteers, marauders, hooligans, counter-revolutionary agitators and German spies are to be shot on the spot.*

*The socialist fatherland is in danger! Long live the socialist fatherland! Long live the international socialist revolution!*

*Council of People's Commissars*

February 21, 1918  
Petrograd

---

## **POSITION OF THE C.C. OF THE R.S.D.L.P. (BOLSHEVIKS) ON THE QUESTION OF THE SEPARATE AND ANNEXATIONIST PEACE**

Dear Comrades,

The Organising Bureau of the Central Committee considers it essential to submit to you an explanation of the motives that led the Central Committee to agree to the peace terms proposed by the German Government. The Organising Bureau is addressing this explanation to you, comrades, in order that all Party members should be thoroughly informed of the point of view of the Central Committee which, in the period between Congresses, represents the entire Party. The Organising Bureau considers it essential to state that the Central Committee was not unanimous on the question of signing the peace terms. Since the decision has been made, however, it must be supported by the whole Party. A Party Congress is due in a few days, and only then will it be possible to decide the question of the extent to which the Central Committee rightly expressed the actual position of the whole Party. Until the Congress, all Party members, in pursuance of their duty to the Party and for the sake of the maintenance of unity in our Party ranks, will carry out the decision of their central leading body, the Central Committee of the Party.

The absolute necessity of signing, at the given moment (February 24, 1918), an annexationist and unbelievably harsh peace treaty with Germany is due primarily to the fact that we have no army and cannot defend ourselves.

Everybody knows why since October 25, 1917, since the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, we have all become defencists, we are all for the defence of the fatherland.

From the point of view of defending the fatherland, it is impermissible for us to allow ourselves to be drawn into an armed conflict when we have no army and the enemy is armed to the teeth and excellently prepared.

The Soviet Socialist Republic cannot wage a war when the obviously overwhelming majority of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers who elect deputies to the Soviets are against the war. It would be a rash gamble. It will be a different thing if an end is put to this war, excessively harsh though the terms of peace may be, and German imperialism again decides to start an aggressive war against Russia. Then the majority of the Soviets will most certainly be in favour of war.

To wage war today would amount objectively to falling for the provocation of the Russian bourgeoisie. They know full well that at the moment Russia is defenceless and would be crushed by even insignificant German forces, which would have only to cut the main railway lines to starve Petrograd and Moscow into surrendering. The bourgeoisie want war, because they want the overthrow of Soviet power and an agreement with the German bourgeoisie. The jubilation of the bourgeoisie when the German troops arrived in Dvinsk and Rezhitsa, Venden and Gapsal, Minsk and Drissa confirms this as clearly as can be.

Defence of revolutionary war at the present moment is nothing but an empty revolutionary phrase. It is impossible for a ruined peasant country to wage a modern war against advanced imperialism without an army and without the most serious economic preparation. It is beyond all doubt that German imperialism must be resisted, for it will crush us and hold us prisoner. It would, however, be empty talk to demand resistance specifically by means of armed uprising, especially now, when *such* resistance is obviously hopeless for us, and obviously to the advantage of the German and Russian bourgeoisie.

It is equally empty talk to argue in favour of revolutionary war at this moment on the grounds of support for the international socialist movement. If we make it easier for German imperialism to crush the Soviet Republic by our untimely acceptance of battle, we shall harm and not help the German and international working-class movement and the cause of socialism. We must help only the revolutionary internationalists in all countries by all-round, persistent and systematic work; but to undertake the gamble of launching an armed uprising, when it would obviously be a gamble, is unworthy of a Marxist.

If Liebknecht is victorious in two or three weeks (which is possible) he will, of course, get us out of all difficulties. It would, however, be simply foolish and would be turning the great slogan of the solidarity of the working people of all countries into sheer mockery if we were to assure the people that Liebknecht will certainly and unavoidably score victory within the next few weeks. Indeed, by arguing in this way we should be turning the great slogan "We bank on the world revolution" into an empty phrase.

Objectively the situation is similar to that of the summer of 1907. Then, it was the Russian monarchist Stolypin who crushed us and held us prisoner; today it is the German imperialist. Then, the slogan of an immediate insurrection, which, unfortunately, was supported by the entire Socialist-Revolutionary Party, proved to be an empty phrase. Today, at this very moment, the slogan of revolutionary war is obviously an empty phrase that attracts the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who repeat the arguments of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. We are the prisoners of German imperialism and we have ahead of us a long and difficult struggle to overthrow that ringleader of world imperialism; this struggle is undoubtedly the last decisive struggle for socialism, but to begin that struggle at the present moment with an armed uprising against the leader of imperialism would be a gamble that no Marxist would ever undertake.

The systematic, unrelenting, all-round building up of the country's defence potential, self-discipline everywhere, the use of grievous defeat to improve discipline in all spheres of life for the purpose of the country's economic progress and the consolidation of Soviet power—that is the task of the day, that is the way to prepare a revolutionary war in deed and not merely in word.

In conclusion, the Organising Bureau considers it essential to state that, since the offensive of German imperialism has not yet been halted, all members of the Party must organise a concerted opposition to it. If it is impossible to sign a peace treaty, even the harshest, and gain time to prepare for new battles, our Party must emphasise the need to exert every effort for all-out resistance.

If we can gain time, gain even a brief respite for organisational work, we must do our best to get it. If we are granted no deferment our Party must call on the masses to fight, to engage in the most energetic self-defence. We are confident that all Party members will do their duty by the Party, by the working class of their country, by the people and the proletariat. By preserving Soviet power we are rendering the best, the most powerful support to the proletariat of all countries in their incredibly hard struggle against their own bourgeoisie. Today the cause of socialism could suffer no heavier blow than the collapse of Soviet power in Russia.

With comradely greetings,

*Organising Bureau of the Central Committee  
of the R.S.D.L.P. (Bolsheviks)*

---

## A PAINFUL BUT NECESSARY LESSON

The week from February 18 to 24, 1918, has been one that will be remembered as a great turning-point in the history of the Russian—and the international—revolution.

On February 27, 1917, the Russian proletariat, jointly with part of the peasantry who had been aroused by the course the war was taking, and also with the bourgeoisie, overthrew the monarchy. On April 21, 1917, the proletariat overthrew the absolute rule of the imperialist bourgeoisie and shifted power into the hands of the petty-bourgeois advocates of compromise with the bourgeoisie. On July 3, the urban proletariat gave the compromisers' government a severe shock by its spontaneous demonstration. On October 25, it overthrew that government and established the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry.

This victory had to be defended in civil war. It took about three months, beginning with the victory over Kerensky near Gatchina, continued in the victories over the bourgeoisie, the officer cadets and part of the counter-revolutionary Cossacks in Moscow, Irkutsk, Orenburg and Kiev, and ending with the victory over Kaledin, Kornilov and Alexeyev at Rostov-on-Don.

The fire of proletarian insurrection flared up in Finland,<sup>238</sup> and the conflagration spread to Rumania.

Victories on the home front were achieved with relative ease since the enemy did not possess any material or organisational advantage, and, furthermore, did not have any sound economic basis or any support among the masses. The ease with which these victories were gained was bound to turn the heads of many leaders. Their attitude has been: "We'll have a walk-over."

They have disregarded the widespread disintegration of the army, which is rapidly demobilising itself and abandoning the front. They have become intoxicated with revolutionary phrases. They have applied them to the struggle against world imperialism.

They have mistaken Russia's temporary "freedom" from imperialist pressure for something normal, although actually that "freedom" was due only to an interruption in the war between the German and Anglo-French plunderers. They have mistaken the mass strikes that are beginning in Austria and Germany for a revolution that is supposed to have delivered us from any serious danger from German imperialism. Instead of serious, effective, sustained work to aid the German revolution, which is coming to birth in a particularly difficult and painful manner, we have had people waving their arms—"what can those German imperialists do—with Liebknecht on our side we'll kick them out in no time!"

The week from February 18 to February 24, 1918, from the capture of Dvinsk to the capture of Pskov (later recaptured), the week of imperialist Germany's military offensive against the Soviet Socialist Republic, has been a bitter, distressing, and painful lesson, but it has been a necessary, useful and beneficial one. How highly instructive it has been to compare the two groups of telegraphic and telephonic communications that have reached the central government in the past week! On the one hand there has been the unrestrained flood of "resolution-type" revolutionary phrases—one might call them Steinberg phrases, if one recalls a chef-d'œuvre in that style, the speech of the "Left" (hm . . . hm) Socialist-Revolutionary Steinberg at the Saturday meeting of the Central Executive Committee.<sup>239</sup> On the other hand there have been the painful and humiliating reports of regiments refusing to retain their positions, of refusal to defend even the Narva Line, and of disobedience to the order to destroy everything in the event of a retreat, not to mention the running away, the chaos, ineptitude, helplessness and slovenliness.

A bitter, distressing, painful but necessary, useful and beneficial lesson!

The thoughtful, class-conscious worker will draw three conclusions from this historic lesson—on our attitude to the defence of the fatherland, its defence potential and to socialist revolutionary war; on the conditions under which we may come into collision with world imperialism; on the correct presentation of the question of our attitude to the world socialist movement.

We are and have been defencists since October 25, 1917, we champion the defence of the fatherland ever since that day. That is because we have shown *by deed* that we have broken away from imperialism. We have denounced and published the filthy, bloodstained treaties of the imperialist plotters. We have overthrown *our own* bourgeoisie. We have given freedom to the peoples *we* formerly oppressed. We have given land to the people and introduced workers' control. We are in favour of defending the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic.

And because we are in favour of defending the fatherland we demand a *serious* attitude towards the country's defence potential and preparedness for war. We declare a ruthless war against revolutionary phrases about revolutionary war. There must be a lengthy, serious preparation for it, beginning with economic progress, the restoration of the railways (for without them modern warfare is an empty phrase) and with the establishment of the strictest revolutionary discipline and self-discipline everywhere.

From the point of view of the defence of the fatherland it would be a crime to enter into an armed conflict with an infinitely superior and well-prepared enemy when we obviously have no army. From the point of view of the defence of the fatherland we have to conclude the most harsh, oppressive, brutal, disgraceful peace—not in order to “capitulate” to imperialism but in order to learn and prepare to fight against imperialism in a serious and effective manner.

The past week has raised the Russian revolution to an immeasurably higher level of historical development. In the course of it history has progressed, has ascended several steps at once.

Until now we have been faced with miserable, despicable (from the standpoint of world imperialism) enemies, an idiot called Romanov, Kerensky the boaster, gangs of officer cadets and bourgeois. Now there has arisen against us the giant of world imperialism, a splendidly organised and technically well-equipped, civilised giant. That giant *must* be fought. And one must *know how* to fight him. A peasant country that has been subjected to unparalleled devastation by three years of war and that has begun the socialist revolution, must avoid armed conflicts—must avoid them while it is still possible, even at the cost of huge sacrifices—in order to be able to do something worthwhile before the “last, decisive battle” begins.

That battle will begin only when the socialist revolution breaks out in the leading imperialist countries. That revolution is undoubtedly maturing and growing stronger month by month, week by week. That growing strength *must* be helped. And we have to *know how* to help it. It would harm and not help that growing strength if we were to give up the neighbouring Soviet Socialist Republic to destruction at a moment when it obviously has no army.

We must not turn into an empty phrase the great slogan “We bank on the victory of socialism in Europe”. It is a true slogan if we have in mind the long and difficult path to the full victory of socialism. It is an indisputable philosophic-historical truth in respect of the entire “era of the socialist revolution”. But any abstract truth becomes an empty phrase if it is applied to *any* concrete situation. It is indisputable that “every strike conceals the hydra of the social revolution”. But it is nonsense to think that



we can stride directly from a strike to the revolution. If we "bank on the victory of socialism in Europe" in the sense that we guarantee to the people that the European revolution will break out and is certain to be victorious within the next few weeks, certainly before the Germans have time to reach Petrograd, Moscow or Kiev, before they have time to "finish off" our railway transport, we shall be acting not as serious internationalist revolutionaries, but as adventurers.

If Liebknecht is victorious over the bourgeoisie in two or three weeks (it is not impossible), he will get us out of all difficulties. That is beyond doubt. If, however, we determine our tactics for today in the struggle against the imperialism of today in the hope that Liebknecht will probably be victorious within the next few weeks, we shall deserve nothing but ridicule. We shall be turning the greatest revolutionary slogans of the present day into an empty revolutionary phrase.

Worker comrades, learn from the painful but useful lessons of the revolution! Prepare seriously, vigorously and unwaveringly to defend the fatherland, to defend the Soviet Socialist Republic!

*Pravda* No. 35 (evening issue),  
February 25 (12), 1918  
Signed: *Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27,  
pp 62 66

---

# **DRAFT DECISION OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS ON THE EVACUATION OF THE GOVERNMENT<sup>240</sup>**

1. Choose Moscow as the seat of government.
2. From each department evacuate the minimum number of leaders of the central administrative body, not more than two or three dozen people (plus families).
3. Whatever happens, immediately remove the State Bank, the gold and the Stationery Office.
4. Begin evacuating Moscow valuables.

Written on February 26, 1918

First published in 1929  
in *Lenin Miscellany* XI

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27,  
p. 67

---

## STRANGE AND MONSTROUS

The Moscow Regional Bureau of our Party, in a resolution adopted on February 24, 1918, has expressed lack of confidence in the Central Committee,<sup>241</sup> refused to obey those of its decisions "that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany", and, in an "explanatory note" to the resolution, declared that it "considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable".\*

There is nothing monstrous, nor even strange in all this. It is quite natural that comrades who sharply disagree with the Central Committee over the question of a separate peace should sharply condemn the Central Committee and express their conviction that a split is inevitable. All that is the most legitimate right of Party members, which is quite understandable.

But here is what is strange and monstrous. An "explanatory note" is appended to the resolution. Here it is in full:

"The Moscow Regional Bureau considers a split in the Party in the very near future hardly avoidable, and it sets itself the aim of helping to unite all consistent revolutionary Communists who equally oppose both the advocates of the conclusion of a separate peace and all moderate opportunists in the Party. *In the interests of the world revolution, we consider it expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power, which is now becoming purely formal. We maintain as before that our primary task is to spread the ideas of the socialist revolution to all other countries and resolutely to promote the workers' dictatorship, ruthlessly to suppress bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia.*"

\* Here is the full text of the resolution. Having discussed the activities of the Central Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the RSD.L.P. expresses lack of confidence in the Central Committee in view of its political line and composition, and will at the first opportunity insist that a new Central Committee be elected. Furthermore, the Moscow Regional Bureau does not consider itself bound to obey unreservedly those decisions of the Central Committee that will be connected with the implementation of the terms of the peace treaty with Austria and Germany." The resolution was adopted unanimously.

It is the words we have stressed in this passage which are—strange and monstrous.

It is in these words that the crux of the matter lies.

These words reduce to an absurdity the whole line put forward by the authors of the resolution. These words expose the root of their error with exceptional clarity.

“In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power. . . .” That is strange, for there is not even any connection between the premises and the conclusion. “In the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the *military defeat* of Soviet power”—such a proposition might be right or wrong, but it could not be called strange. That is the first thing.

Second thing: Soviet power “is now becoming purely formal”. Now this is not only strange but downright monstrous. Obviously, the authors have got themselves thoroughly entangled. We shall have to disentangle them.

As regards the first question, the authors’ idea evidently is that it would be expedient in the interests of the world revolution to accept the possibility of defeat in war, which would lead to the loss of Soviet power, in other words, to the triumph of the bourgeoisie in Russia. By voicing this idea the authors indirectly admit the truth of what I said in the theses (on January 8, 1918, published in *Pravda* on February 24, 1918),\* namely, that refusal to accept the peace terms presented by Germany would lead to Russia’s defeat and the overthrow of Soviet power.

And so, *la raison finit toujours par avoir raison*—the truth always triumphs! My “extremist” opponents, the Muscovites who threaten a split, have been obliged—just because they have got to the point of talking openly of a split—to be equally explicit about their *real* reasons, the reasons which people who confine themselves to general phrase-making about revolutionary war prefer to pass over in silence. The very essence of my theses and arguments (as anyone who cares to read attentively my theses of January 7, 1918, may see) is that we must accept this extremely harsh peace *now*, at once, while at the same time seriously *preparing* for a revolutionary war (and accept it, moreover, precisely *in the interest* of such serious preparations). Those who confined themselves to general phrase-making about a revolutionary war ignored or failed to notice, or did not want to notice, the very essence of my arguments. And now it is my “extremist” opponents, the Muscovites, whom I have to thank from the bottom of my heart for having broken the “conspiracy of silence” over

\* See pp. 480-86 of the present volume —Ed.

the *essence* of my arguments. The Muscovites have been the *first* to reply to them.

And what is their reply?

Their reply is an *admission of the correctness* of my *concrete* argument. Yes, the Muscovites have admitted, we shall certainly be defeated if we fight the Germans now.\* Yes, this defeat would certainly lead to the fall of Soviet power.

Again and again I thank my "extremist" opponents, the Muscovites, from the bottom of my heart for having broken the "conspiracy of silence" against the *essence* of my arguments, i.e., against my *concrete* statement as to what the conditions of war would be, if we were to accept it at once, and for having fearlessly admitted the correctness of my concrete statement.

Further, on what grounds are my arguments, the substantial correctness of which the Muscovites have been compelled to admit, rejected?

On the grounds that in the interests of the world revolution we *must* accept the loss of Soviet power.

Why should the interests of the world revolution demand it? This is the crux of the matter; this is the very *essence* of the reasoning of those who would like to defeat my arguments. And it is on this, the most important, fundamental and vital point, that not a word is said, either in the resolution or in the explanatory note. The authors of the resolution found time and space to speak of what is universally known and indisputable—of "ruthlessly suppressing bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia" (using the methods and means of a policy which would lead to the loss of Soviet power?), and of opposing all moderate opportunists in the Party—but of that which is really disputable and which concerns the very *essence* of the position of the opponents of peace—not a word!

Strange. Extremely strange. Did the authors of the resolution keep silent about this because they felt that on this point they were particularly weak? To have plainly stated *why* (this is demanded by the interests of the world revolution) would most likely have meant exposing themselves. . . .

However that may be, we have to *seek out* the arguments which *may* have guided the authors of the resolution.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution forbid making any peace at all with imperialists? This

\*As to the counter-argument, that to avoid fighting was anyway impossible, the reply has been given by the facts. On January 8 my theses were read by January 15 we *might* have had peace. A respite would have been certainly assured (and for us even the briefest respite would have been of gigantic significance, both materially and morally, for the *Germans* would have had to declare a *new war*), if . . . if it had not been for revolutionary phrase-making.

opinion was expressed by some of the opponents of peace at one of the Petrograd meetings, but only an insignificant minority of those who objected to a separate peace supported it. It is clear that this opinion would lead to a denial of the expediency of the Brest negotiations and to a rejection of peace, "even" if accompanied by the return of Poland, Latvia and Courland. The incorrectness of this view (which was rejected, for example, by a majority of the Petrograd opponents of peace) is as clear as day. A socialist republic surrounded by imperialist powers could not, from this point of view, conclude any economic treaties, and could not exist at all, without flying to the moon.

Perhaps the authors believe that the interests of the world revolution require that it should be *given a push*, and that such a push can be given only by war, never by peace, which might give the people the impression that imperialism was being "legitimised"? Such a "theory" would be completely at variance with Marxism, for Marxism has always been opposed to "pushing" revolutions, which develop with the growing acuteness of the class antagonisms that engender revolutions. Such a theory would be tantamount to the view that armed uprising is a form of struggle which is obligatory always and under all conditions. Actually, however, the interests of the world revolution demand that Soviet power, having overthrown the bourgeoisie in our country, should *help* that revolution, but that it should choose a *form* of help which is commensurate with its own strength. To help the socialist revolution on an international scale by accepting the possibility of defeat of that revolution in *one's own* country is a view that does not follow even from the "pushing" theory.

Perhaps the authors of the resolution believe that revolution has already begun in Germany and has already reached the stage of an open, nation-wide civil war, that we must therefore devote our strength to helping the German workers, and must perish ourselves ("losing Soviet power") to *save* a German revolution which has already started its decisive fight and is being hard pressed? According to this theory, we, while perishing ourselves, would be diverting part of the forces of German counter-revolution, thereby saving the German revolution.

It is quite conceivable that, given these premises, it would not only be "expedient" (as the authors of the resolution put it) but a downright *duty* to accept the possibility of defeat and the possibility of the loss of Soviet power. But obviously these premises do not exist. The German revolution is ripening, but it has obviously not reached the stage of an explosion in Germany, of civil war in Germany. By "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", we certainly would not be helping the German revolution to reach maturity, but *would be hindering* it. We would be helping German

reaction, playing into its hands, hampering the socialist movement in Germany and frightening away from socialism large masses of German proletarians and semi-proletarians who have not yet come over to socialism and would be scared by the defeat of Soviet Russia, just as the British workers were scared by the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Twist and turn them how you will, but you can find no logic in the authors' contentions. There are no sensible arguments to support the view that "in the interests of the world revolution it is expedient to accept the possibility of losing Soviet power".

"Soviet power is now becoming purely formal"—this, as we see, is the monstrous view the authors of the Moscow resolution have come to proclaim.

Since the German imperialists are going to make us pay indemnities and forbid us to carry on propaganda and agitation against Germany, Soviet power loses all significance and "becomes purely formal"—this is probably the line of "reasoning" of the authors of the resolution. We say "probably", for the authors offer nothing clear and specific in support of their thesis.

Profound and hopeless pessimism and complete despair—such is the sum and substance of the "theory" that the significance of Soviet power is purely formal, and that tactics which will risk the possible loss of Soviet power are permissible. Since there is no salvation anyway, then let even Soviet power perish—such is the sentiment that dictated this monstrous resolution. The allegedly "economic" arguments in which such ideas are sometimes clothed reveal the same hopeless pessimism: what sort of Soviet republic is it—the implication is—when not just tribute, but tribute on such a scale can be exacted from it?

Nothing but despair: we shall perish anyhow!

It is a quite understandable mood in the extremely desperate situation in which Russia finds herself. But it is not "understandable" among conscious revolutionaries. The typical thing about it is that here we have the views of the Muscovites reduced to absurdity. The Frenchmen of 1793 would never have said that their gains—the republic and democracy—were becoming purely formal and that they would have to accept the possibility of losing the republic. They were not filled with despair, but with faith in victory. To call for a revolutionary war, and at the same time to talk in an official resolution of "accepting the possibility of losing Soviet power", is to expose oneself completely.

Early in the nineteenth century, at the time of the Napoleonic wars, Prussia and a number of other countries suffered incomparably and immeasurably greater hardships and burdens of defeat, conquest, humiliation and oppression on the part of the conqueror than Russia is suffering in 1918. Yet the best men of

Prussia, when Napoleon's military jackboots trampled upon them a hundred times more heavily than we can be trampled upon now, did not despair, and did not say that their national political institutions were "purely formal". They did not give up, did not succumb to the feeling: "We shall perish anyhow." They signed peace treaties infinitely more drastic, brutal, humiliating and oppressive than the Brest Treaty, and then knew how to bide their time; they staunchly bore the conqueror's yoke, fought again, fell under the conqueror's yoke again, again signed the vilest of vile peace treaties, and again rose, and *in the end liberated themselves* (not without exploiting the dissensions among the stronger competing conquerors).

Why shouldn't this be repeated in our history?

Why should we give way to despair and write resolutions—which, by heavens, are more disgraceful than the most disgraceful peace—saying that "Soviet power is becoming purely formal"?

Why shouldn't the most crushing military defeats in the struggle against the giants of modern imperialism steel the national character in Russia, too, strengthen self-discipline, put an end to the bragging and phrase-making, teach fortitude and bring the people round to the correct tactics of the Prussians when they were crushed by Napoleon—the tactics of signing the most humiliating of peace treaties when you haven't an army, then mustering your forces and rising again and again?

Why should we give way to despair at the first peace treaty, incredibly harsh though it be, when other nations were able staunchly to bear even bitterer misfortunes?

Is it the staunchness of the proletarian who knows that one must submit when strength is lacking, and is then nevertheless able to rise again and again at any price and to build up strength under *all* circumstances, that corresponds to these tactics of despair, or, rather, the spinelessness of the petty bourgeois, who in our country, in the shape of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, has beaten the record for phrase-making about a revolutionary war?

No, dear Moscow "extremist" comrades, every day of trial will drive away from you those very workers who are the most class-conscious and the staunchest. Soviet power, they will say, is not *becoming*, and will not *become*, purely formal; and not only now, when the conqueror is in Pskov and is making us pay a ten-thousand-million-ruble tribute in grain, ore and money, but even if he gets as far as Nizhni-Novgorod and Rostov-on-Don and makes us pay a tribute of twenty thousand million rubles.

Never will any foreign conquest render a popular political institution "purely formal" (and Soviet power is *not* only a political institution far and away superior to anything known to history). On the contrary, alien conquest will only strengthen popular



sympathy for Soviet power, provided—provided it does not indulge in reckless follies.

And to refuse to conclude even the vilest peace when you have no army would be a reckless gamble, for which the people would be justified in condemning the government that refused to do so.

Immensely more harsh and humiliating peace treaties than the Brest Treaty have been signed before in history (we gave some instances above) without discrediting the regime or turning it into a formality; they ruined neither the regime nor the people, but rather steeled the people, *taught* them the stern and difficult science of building up an effective army even in the most desperate conditions and under the heel of the conqueror.

Russia is making for a new and genuine patriotic war, a war for the preservation and consolidation of Soviet power. It is possible that another epoch will—like the epoch of the Napoleonic wars—be an epoch of liberation *wars* (not one war, but wars) imposed by aggressors upon Soviet Russia. That is possible.

And, therefore, more humiliating than any harsh or even extremely harsh peace, rendered imperative owing to the lack of an army—more humiliating than any humiliating peace is humiliating despair. We shall not perish even from a dozen obnoxious peace treaties if we take revolt and war *seriously*. No conquerors can destroy us if we do not destroy ourselves by despair and phrase-making.

*Pravda* Nos. 37 and 38,  
February 28 (15) and March 1  
(February 16), 1918  
Signed: *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works*, Vol. 27,  
pp. 68-75

---

# **EXTRAORDINARY SEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE R.C.P.(B.)<sup>242</sup>**

**MARCH 6-8, 1918**

## **1 POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MARCH 7**

A political report might consist of an enumeration of measures taken by the Central Committee; but the essential thing at the present moment is not a report of this kind, but a review of our revolution as a whole; that is the only thing that can provide a truly Marxist substantiation of all our decisions. We must examine the whole preceding course of development of the revolution and ascertain why the course of its further development has changed. There have been turning-points in our revolution that will have enormous significance for the world revolution. One such turning-point was the *October Revolution*.

The first successes of the February Revolution were due to the fact that the proletariat was followed, not only by the masses of the rural population, but also by the bourgeoisie. Hence, the easy victory over tsarism, something we had failed to achieve in 1905. The spontaneous formation of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in the February Revolution was a repetition of the experience of 1905—we had to proclaim the principle of Soviet power. The masses learned the tasks of the revolution from their own experience of the struggle. The events of April 20-21 were a peculiar combination of demonstrations and of something in the nature of armed uprising. This was enough to cause the fall of the bourgeois government. Then began the long period of the collaboration policy, which stemmed from the very nature of the petty-bourgeois government that had come to power. The July events could not then establish the dictatorship of the proletariat—the masses were still not prepared for it. That was why not one of the responsible organisations called upon them to establish it. But as a reconnoitring operation in the enemy's camp, the July events were of enormous significance. The Kornilov revolt and the subsequent events served as practical lessons and made possible the October victory. The mistake committed by those who even in October

wished to divide power<sup>243</sup> was their failure to connect the October victory with the July days, with the offensive, with the Kornilov revolt, etc., etc., events which caused the millions of the common people to realise that Soviet power had become inevitable. Then followed our triumphal march throughout Russia, accompanied by a universal desire for peace. We know that we cannot achieve peace by a unilateral withdrawal from the war. We pointed to this as far back as the April Conference.\* In the period from April to October, the soldiers clearly realised that the policy of collaboration was prolonging the war and was leading to the savage, senseless attempts of the imperialists to start an offensive and to get still more entangled in a war that would last for years. That was the reason why it was necessary at all costs to adopt an active policy of peace as quickly as possible, why it was necessary for the Soviets to take power into their own hands, and abolish landed proprietorship. You know that the latter was upheld not only by Kerensky but also by Avksentyev, who even went so far as to order the arrest of the members of the Land Committees. The policy we adopted, the slogan of "Power to the Soviets", which we instilled into the minds of the majority of the people, enabled us, in October, to achieve victory very easily in St. Petersburg, and transformed the last months of the Russian revolution into one continuous triumphal march.

Civil war became a fact. The transformation of the imperialist war into civil war, which we had predicted at the beginning of the revolution, and even at the beginning of the war, and which considerable sections of socialist circles treated sceptically and even with ridicule, actually took place on October 25, 1917, in one of the largest and most backward of the belligerent countries. In this civil war the overwhelming majority of the population proved to be on our side, and that is why victory was achieved with such extraordinary ease.

The troops who abandoned the front carried with them wherever they went the maximum of revolutionary determination to put an end to collaboration; and the collaborationist elements, the whiteguards and the landowners' sons found themselves without support among the population. The war against them gradually turned into a victorious triumphal march of the revolution as the masses of the people and the military units that were sent against us came over to the side of the Bolsheviks. We saw this in Petrograd, on the Gatchina front, where the Cossacks, whom Kerensky and Krasnov tried to lead against the Red capital, wavered; we saw this later in Moscow, in Orenburg and in the Ukraine. A wave of civil war swept over the whole of Russia,

---

\* See pp. 87-88 and 94 of the present volume. *Ed.*

and everywhere we achieved victory with extraordinary ease precisely because the fruit had ripened, because the masses had already gone through the experience of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Our slogan "All Power to the Soviets", which the masses had tested in practice by long historical experience, had become part of their flesh and blood.

That is why the Russian revolution was a continuous triumphal march in the first months after October 25, 1917. As a result of this the difficulties which the socialist revolution immediately encountered, and could not but encounter, were forgotten, were pushed into the background. One of the fundamental differences between bourgeois revolution and socialist revolution is that for the bourgeois revolution, which arises out of feudalism, the new economic organisations are gradually created in the womb of the old order, gradually changing all the aspects of feudal society. The bourgeois revolution faced only one task—to sweep away, to cast aside, to destroy all the fetters of the preceding social order. By fulfilling this task every bourgeois revolution fulfils all that is required of it; it accelerates the growth of capitalism.

The socialist revolution is in an altogether different position. The more backward the country which, owing to the zigzags of history, has proved to be the one to start the socialist revolution, the more difficult is it for that country to pass from the old capitalist relations to socialist relations. New incredibly difficult tasks, organisational tasks, are added to the tasks of destruction. Had not the popular creative spirit of the Russian revolution, which had gone through the great experience of the year 1905, given rise to the Soviets as early as February 1917, they could not under any circumstances have assumed power in October, because success depended entirely upon the existence of available organisational forms of a movement embracing millions. The Soviets were the available form, and that is why in the political sphere the future held out to us those brilliant successes, the continuous triumphal march, that we had; for the new form of political power was already available, and all we had to do was to pass a few decrees, and transform the power of the Soviets from the embryonic state in which it existed in the first months of the revolution into the legally recognised form which had become established in the Russian state—i.e., into the Russian Soviet Republic. The Republic was born at one stroke; it was born so easily because in February 1917 the masses had created the Soviets even before any party had managed to proclaim this slogan. It was the great creative spirit of the people, which had passed through the bitter experience of 1905 and had been made wise by it, that gave rise to this form of proletarian power. The task of achieving victory over the internal enemy was an extremely easy one. The

task of creating the political power was an extremely easy one because the masses had created the skeleton, the basis of this power. The Republic of Soviets was born at one stroke. But two exceedingly difficult problems still remained, the solution of which could not possibly be the triumphal march we experienced in the first months of our revolution—we did not doubt, we could not doubt, that the socialist revolution would be later confronted with enormously difficult tasks.

First, there was the problem of internal organisation, which confronts every socialist revolution. The difference between a socialist revolution and a bourgeois revolution is that in the latter case there are ready-made forms of capitalist relationships; Soviet power—the proletarian power—does not inherit such ready-made relationships, if we leave out of account the most developed forms of capitalism, which, strictly speaking, extended to but a small top layer of industry and hardly touched agriculture. The organisation of accounting, the control of large enterprises, the transformation of the whole of the state economic mechanism into a single huge machine, into an economic organism that will work in such a way as to enable hundreds of millions of people to be guided by a single plan—such was the enormous organisational problem that rested on our shoulders. Under the present conditions of labour this problem could not possibly be solved by the “hurrah” methods by which we were able to solve the problems of the Civil War. The very nature of the task prevented a solution by these methods. We achieved easy victories over the Kaledin revolt and created the Soviet Republic in face of a resistance that was not even worth serious consideration; the course of events was predetermined by the whole of the preceding objective development, so that all we had to do was say the last word and change the signboard, i.e., take down the sign “The Soviet exists as a trade union organisation”, and put up instead the sign “The Soviet is the sole form of state power”; the situation, however, was altogether different in regard to organisational problems. In this field we encountered enormous difficulties. It immediately became clear to everyone who cared to ponder over the tasks of our revolution that only by the hard and long path of self-discipline would it be possible to overcome the disintegration that the war had caused in capitalist society, that only by extraordinarily hard, long and persistent effort could we cope with this disintegration and defeat those elements aggravating it, elements which regarded the revolution as a means of discarding old fetters and getting as much out of it for themselves as they possibly could. The emergence of a large number of such elements was inevitable in a small-peasant country at a time of incredible economic chaos, and the fight against these elements that is ahead of us, that we have only just started, will be a hundred

times more difficult, it will be a fight which promises no spectacular opportunities. We are only in the first stage of this fight. Severe trials await us. The objective situation precludes any idea of limiting ourselves to a triumphal march with flying banners such as we had in fighting against Kaledin. Anyone who attempted to apply these methods of struggle to the organisational tasks that confront the revolution would only prove his bankruptcy as a politician, as a socialist, as an active worker in the socialist revolution.

The same thing awaited some of our young comrades who were carried away by the initial triumphal march of the revolution, when it came up against the second enormous difficulty—the international question. The reason we achieved such an easy victory over Kerensky's gangs, the reason we so easily set up our government and without the slightest difficulty passed decrees on the socialisation of the land and on workers' control, the reason we achieved all this so easily was a fortunate combination of circumstances that protected us for a short time from international imperialism. International imperialism, with the entire might of its capital, with its highly organised war machine, which is a real force, a real stronghold of international capital, could not, under any circumstances, under any conditions, live side by side with the Soviet Republic, both because of its objective position and because of the economic interests of the capitalist class embodied in it, because of commercial connections, of international financial relations. In this sphere a conflict is inevitable. This is the greatest difficulty of the Russian revolution, its greatest historical problem—the need to solve international problems, the need to evoke a world revolution, to effect the transition from our strictly national revolution to the world revolution. This problem confronts us in all its incredible difficulty. I repeat, very many of our young friends who regard themselves as Lefts have begun to forget the most important thing: why in the course of the weeks and months of the enormous triumph after October we were able so easily to pass from victory to victory. And yet this was due only to a special combination of international circumstances that temporarily shielded us from imperialism. Imperialism had other things to bother about besides us. And it seemed to us that we, too, had other things to bother about besides imperialism. Individual imperialists had no time to bother with us, solely because the whole of the great social, political and military might of modern world imperialism was split by internecine war into two groups. The imperialist plunderers involved in this struggle had gone to such incredible lengths, were locked in mortal combat to such a degree, that neither of the groups was able to concentrate any effective forces against the Russian revolution. These were the circumstances in which we found our-

selves in October. It is paradoxical but true that our revolution broke out at so fortunate a moment, when unprecedented disasters involving the destruction of millions of human beings had overtaken most of the imperialist countries, when the unprecedented calamities attending the war had exhausted the nations, when in the fourth year of the war the belligerent countries had reached an impasse, a parting of the ways, when the question arose objectively—could nations reduced to such a state continue fighting? It was only because our revolution broke out at so fortunate a moment as this, when neither of the two gigantic groups of plunderers was in a position immediately either to hurl itself at the other, or to unite with the other against us; our revolution could (and did) take advantage only of a situation such as this in international political and economic relations to accomplish its brilliant triumphal march in European Russia, spread to Finland and begin to win the Caucasus and Rumania. This alone explains the appearance of Party functionaries, intellectual supermen, in the leading circles of our Party who allowed themselves to be carried away by this triumphal march and who said we could cope with international imperialism; over there, there will also be a triumphal march, over there, there will be no real difficulties. This was at variance with the objective position of the Russian revolution which had merely taken advantage of the setback of international imperialism; the engine that was supposed to bear down on us with the force of a railway train bearing down on a wheelbarrow and smashing it to splinters, was temporarily stalled—and the engine was stalled because the two groups of predators had clashed. Here and there the revolutionary movement was growing, but in all the imperialist countries without exception it was still mainly in the initial stage. Its rate of development was entirely different from ours. Anyone who has given careful thought to the economic prerequisites of the socialist revolution in Europe must be clear on the point that in Europe it will be immeasurably more difficult to start whereas it was immeasurably more easy for us to start; but it will be more difficult for us to continue the revolution than it will be over there. This objective situation caused us to experience an extraordinarily sharp and difficult turn in history. From the continuous triumphal march on our internal front, against our counter-revolution, against the enemies of Soviet power in October, November and December, we had to pass to a collision with real international imperialism, in its real hostility towards us. From the period of the triumphal march we had to pass to a period in which we were in an extraordinarily difficult and painful situation, one which certainly could not be brushed aside with words, with brilliant slogans—however pleasant that would have been—because in our disorganised country we had to deal with incredibly weary masses,

who had reached a state in which they could not possibly go on fighting, who were so shattered by three years of agonising war that they were absolutely useless from the military point of view. Even before the October Revolution we saw representatives of the masses of the soldiers, not members of the Bolshevik Party, who did not hesitate to tell the bourgeoisie the truth that the Russian army would not fight. This state of the army has brought about a gigantic crisis. A small-peasant country, disorganised by war, reduced to an incredible state, has been placed in an extremely difficult position. We have no army, but we have to go on living side by side with a predator who is armed to the teeth, a predator who still remains and will continue to remain a plunderer and is not, of course, affected by agitation in favour of peace without annexations and indemnities. A tame, domestic animal has been lying side by side with a tiger and trying to persuade the latter to conclude a peace without annexations and indemnities, although the only way such a peace could be attained was by attacking the tiger. The top layer of our Party—intellectuals and some of the workers' organisations—has been trying in the main to brush this prospect aside with phrases and such excuses as "that is not the way it should be". This peace was too incredible a prospect for them to believe that we, who up to now had marched in open battle with colours flying and had stormed the enemy's positions with "hurrahs", could yield and accept these humiliating terms. Never! We are exceedingly proud revolutionaries, we declare above all: "The Germans cannot attack."

This was the first argument with which these people consoled themselves. History has now placed us in an extraordinarily difficult position; in the midst of organisational work of unparalleled difficulty we shall have to experience a number of painful defeats. Regarded from the world-historical point of view, there would doubtlessly be no hope of the ultimate victory of our revolution if it were to remain alone, if there were no revolutionary movements in other countries. When the Bolshevik Party tackled the job alone, it did so in the firm conviction that the revolution was maturing in all countries and that in the end—but not at the very beginning—no matter what difficulties we experienced, no matter what defeats were in store for us, the world socialist revolution would come—because it is coming; would mature—because it is maturing and will reach full maturity. I repeat, our salvation from all these difficulties is an all-Europe revolution. Taking this truth, this absolutely abstract truth, as our starting-point, and being guided by it, we must see to it that it does not in time become a mere phrase, because every abstract truth, if it is accepted without analysis, becomes a mere phrase. If you say that



every strike conceals the hydra of revolution, and he who fails to understand this is no socialist, you are right. Yes, the socialist revolution looms behind every strike. But if you say that every single strike is an immediate step towards the socialist revolution, you will be uttering perfectly empty phrases. We have heard these phrases "every blessed time in the same place" and have got so sick and tired of them that the workers have rejected these anarchist phrases, because undoubtedly, clear as it is that behind every strike there looms the hydra of socialist revolution, it is equally clear that the assertion that every strike can develop into revolution is utter nonsense. Just as it is indisputable that all the difficulties in our revolution will be overcome only when the world socialist revolution matures—and it is maturing now everywhere—it is absolutely absurd to declare that we must conceal every real difficulty of our revolution today and say: "I bank on the international socialist movement—I can commit any piece of folly I please." "Liebknecht will help us out, because he is going to win, anyhow." He will create such an excellent organisation, he will plan everything beforehand so well that we shall be able to take ready-made forms in the same way as we took the ready-made Marxist doctrine from Western Europe—and maybe that is why it triumphed in our country in a few months, whereas it has been taking decades to triumph in Western Europe. Thus it would have been reckless gambling to apply the old method of solving the problem of the struggle by a triumphal march to the new historical period which has set in, and which has confronted us, not with feeble Kerensky and Kornilov, but with an international predator—the imperialism of Germany, where the revolution has been maturing but has obviously not yet reached maturity. The assertion that the enemy would not dare attack the revolution was such a gamble. The situation at the time of the Brest negotiations was not yet such as to compel us to accept any peace terms. The objective alignment of forces was such that a respite would not have been enough. It took the Brest negotiations to show that the Germans would attack, that German society was not so pregnant with revolution that it could give birth to it at once; and we cannot blame the German imperialists for not having prepared that outbreak by their conduct, or, as our young friends who regard themselves as Lefts say, for not having created a situation in which the Germans could not attack. When we tell them that we have no army, that we were compelled to demobilise—we were compelled to do so, although we never forgot that a tiger was lying beside our tame, domestic animal—they refuse to understand. Although we were compelled to demobilise we did not for a moment forget that it was impossible to end the war unilaterally by issuing an order to stick the bayonets in the ground.

Generally speaking, how is it that not a single trend, not a single tendency, not a single organisation in our Party opposed this demobilisation? Had we gone mad? Not in the least. Officers, not Bolsheviks, had stated even before October that the army could not fight, that it could not be kept at the front even for a few weeks longer. After October this became obvious to everybody who was willing to recognise the facts, willing to see the unpleasant, bitter reality and not hide, or pull his cap over his eyes, and make shift with proud phrases. We have no army, we cannot hold it. The best thing we can do is to demobilise it as quickly as possible. This is the sick part of the organism, which has suffered incredible torture, has been ravaged by the privations of a war into which it entered technically unprepared, and from which it has emerged in such a state that it succumbs to panic at every attack. We cannot blame these people who have experienced incredible suffering. In hundreds of resolutions, even in the first period of the Russian revolution, the soldiers have said quite frankly: "We are drowning in blood, we cannot go on fighting." One could have delayed the end of the war artificially, one could have committed the frauds Kerensky committed, one could have postponed the end for a few weeks, but objective reality broke its own road. This is the sick part of the Russian state organism which can no longer bear the burden of the war. The quicker we demobilise the army, the sooner it will become absorbed by those parts that are not so sick and the sooner will the country be prepared for new severe trials. That is what we felt when we unanimously, without the slightest protest, adopted the decision—which was absurd from the point of view of foreign events—to demobilise the army. It was the proper step to take. We said that it was a frivolous illusion to believe that we could hold the army. The sooner we demobilised the army, the sooner would the social organism as a whole recover. That is why the revolutionary phrase, "The Germans cannot attack", from which the other phrase ("We can declare the state of war terminated. Neither war nor the signing of peace."<sup>24</sup>) derived, was such a profound mistake, such a bitter over-estimation of events. But suppose the Germans do attack? "No, they cannot attack." But have you the right to risk the world revolution? What about the concrete question of whether you may not prove to be accomplices of German imperialism when that moment comes? But we, who since October 1917 have all become defencists, who have recognised the principle of defence of the fatherland, we all know that we have broken with imperialism, not merely in word but in deed; we have destroyed the secret treaties,<sup>245</sup> vanquished the bourgeoisie in our own country and proposed an open and honest peace so that all the nations may see what our intentions really are. How could people who seriously

uphold the position of defending the Soviet Republic agree to this gamble, which has already produced results? And this is a fact, because the severe crisis which our Party is now experiencing, owing to the formation of a "Left" opposition within it, is one of the gravest crises the Russian revolution has experienced.

This crisis will be overcome. Under no circumstances will it break the neck of our Party, or of our revolution, although at the present moment it has come very near to doing so, there was a possibility of it. The guarantee that we shall not break our neck on this question is this: instead of applying the old method of settling factional differences, the old method of issuing an enormous quantity of literature, of having many discussions and plenty of splits, instead of this old method, events have provided our people with a new method of learning things. This method is to put everything to the test of facts, events, the lessons of world history. You said that the Germans could not attack. The logic of your tactics was that we could declare the state of war to be terminated. History has taught you a lesson, it has shattered this illusion. Yes, the German revolution is growing, but not in the way we should like it, not as fast as Russian intellectuals would have it, not at the rate our history developed in October—when we entered any town we liked, proclaimed Soviet power, and within a few days nine-tenths of the workers came over to our side. The German revolution has the misfortune of not moving so fast. What do you think? Must we reckon with the revolution, or must the revolution reckon with us? You wanted the revolution to reckon with you. But history has taught you a lesson. It is a lesson, because it is the absolute truth that without a German revolution we are doomed—perhaps not in Petrograd, not in Moscow, but in Vladivostok, in more remote places to which perhaps we shall have to retreat, and the distance to which is perhaps greater than the distance from Petrograd to Moscow. At all events, under all conceivable circumstances, if the German revolution does not come, we are doomed. Nevertheless, this does not in the least shake our conviction that we must be able to bear the most difficult position without blustering.

The revolution will not come as quickly as we expected. History has proved this, and we must be able to take this as a fact, to reckon with the fact that the world socialist revolution cannot begin so easily in the advanced countries as the revolution began in Russia—in the land of Nicholas and Rasputin, the land in which an enormous part of the population was absolutely indifferent as to what peoples were living in the outlying regions, or what was happening there. In such a country it was quite easy to start a revolution, as easy as lifting a feather.

But to start without preparation a revolution in a country in which capitalism is developed and has given democratic culture and organisation to everybody, down to the last man—to do so would be wrong, absurd. There we are only just approaching the painful period of the beginning of socialist revolutions. This is a fact. We do not know, no one knows, perhaps—it is quite possible—it will triumph within a few weeks, even within a few days, but we cannot stake everything on that. We must be prepared for extraordinary difficulties, for extraordinarily severe defeats, which are inevitable because the revolution in Europe has not yet begun, although it may begin tomorrow; and when it does begin, then, of course, we shall not be tortured by doubts, there will be no question about a revolutionary war, but just one continuous triumphal march. That is to come, it will inevitably be so, but it is not so yet. This is the simple fact that history has taught us, with which it has hit us very painfully—and it is said a man who has been thrashed is worth two who haven't. That is why I think that now history has given us a very painful thrashing, because of our hope that the Germans could not attack and that we could get everything by shouting "hurrah!", this lesson, with the help of our Soviet organisations, will be very quickly brought home to the masses all over Soviet Russia. They are all up and doing, gathering, preparing for the Congress, passing resolutions, thinking over what has happened. What is taking place at the present time does not resemble the old pre-revolutionary controversies, which remained within narrow Party circles; now all decisions are submitted for discussion to the masses, who demand that they be tested by experience, by deeds, who never allow themselves to be carried away by frivolous speeches, and never allow themselves to be diverted from the path prescribed by the objective progress of events. Of course, an intellectual, or a Left Bolshevik, can try to talk his way out of difficulties. He can try to talk his way out of such facts as the absence of an army and the failure of the revolution to begin in Germany. The millions-strong masses—and politics begin where millions of men and women are; where there are not thousands, but millions, that is where serious politics begin—the masses know what the army is like, they have seen soldiers returning from the front. They know—that is, if you take, not individual persons, but real masses—that we cannot fight, that every man at the front has endured everything imaginable. The masses have realised the truth that if we have no army, and a predator is lying beside us, we shall have to sign a most harsh, humiliating peace treaty. That is inevitable until the birth of the revolution, until you cure your army, until you allow the men to return home. Until then the patient will not recover. And we shall not be able to cope with the German predator by shouting "hurrah!"; we shall

not be able to throw him off as easily as we threw off Kerensky and Kornilov. This is the lesson the masses have learned without the excuses that certain of those who desire to evade bitter reality have tried to present them with.

At first a continuous triumphal march in October and November—then, suddenly, in the space of a few weeks, the Russian revolution is defeated by the German predator; the Russian revolution is prepared to accept the terms of a predatory treaty. Yes, the turns taken by history are very painful. All such turns affect us painfully. When, in 1907, we signed the incredibly shameful internal treaty with Stolypin, when we were compelled to pass through the pigsty of the Stolypin Duma and assumed obligations by signing scraps of monarchist paper,<sup>246</sup> we experienced what we are experiencing now but on a smaller scale. At that time, people who were among the finest in the vanguard of the revolution said (and they too had not the slightest doubt that they were right), "We are proud revolutionaries, we believe in the Russian revolution, we will never enter legal Stolypin institutions." Yes, you will, we said. The life of the masses, history, are stronger than your protestations. If you won't go, we said, history will compel you to. These were very Left people and after the first turn in history nothing remained of them as a group but smoke. Just as we proved able to remain revolutionaries, proved able to work under terrible conditions and emerge from them, so shall we emerge now because it is not our whim, it is objective inevitability that has arisen in an utterly ruined country, because in spite of our desires the European revolution dared to be late, and in spite of our desires German imperialism dared to attack.

Here one must know how to retreat. We cannot hide the incredibly bitter, deplorable reality from ourselves with empty phrases; we must say: God grant that we retreat in what is half-way good order. We cannot retreat in good order, but God grant that our retreat is half-way good order, that we gain a little time in which the sick part of our organism can be absorbed at least to some extent. On the whole the organism is sound, it will overcome its sickness. But you cannot expect it to overcome it all at once, instantaneously; you cannot stop an army in flight. When I said to one of our young friends, a would-be Left, "Comrade, go to the front, see what is going on in the army", he took offence at this proposal. He said, "They want to banish us so as to prevent our agitating here for the great principles of a revolutionary war." In making this proposal I really had no intention whatever of banishing factional enemies; I merely suggested that they go and see for themselves that the army had begun to run away in an unprecedented manner. We knew that even before this, even before this we could not close our eyes to the fact that the

disintegration of the army had gone on to such an unheard-of extent that our guns were being sold to the Germans for a song. We knew this, just as we know that the army cannot be held back, and the argument that the Germans would not attack was a great gamble. If the European revolution is late in coming, gravest defeats await us because we have no army, because we lack organisation, because, at the moment, these are two problems we cannot solve. If you are unable to adapt yourself, if you are not inclined to crawl on your belly in the mud, you are not a revolutionary but a chatterbox; and I propose this, not because I like it, but because we have no other road, because history has not been kind enough to bring the revolution to maturity everywhere simultaneously.

The way things are turning out is that the civil war has begun as an attempt at a clash with imperialism, and this has shown that imperialism is rotten to the core, and that proletarian elements are rising in every army. Yes, we shall see the world revolution, but for the time being it is a very good fairy-tale, a very beautiful fairy-tale—I quite understand children liking beautiful fairy-tales. But I ask, is it proper for a serious revolutionary to believe in fairy-tales? There is an element of reality in every fairy-tale. If you told children fairy-tales in which the cock and the cat did not converse in human language they would not be interested. In the same way, if you tell the people that civil war will break out in Germany and also guarantee that instead of a clash with imperialism we shall have a field revolution on a world-wide scale,<sup>247</sup> the people will say you are deceiving them. In doing this you will be overcoming the difficulties with which history has confronted us only in your own minds, by your own wishes. It will be a good thing if the German proletariat is able to take action. But have you measured it, have you discovered an instrument that will show that the German revolution will break out on such-and-such a day? No, you do not know that, and neither do we. You are staking everything on this card. If the revolution breaks out, everything is saved. Of course! But if it does not turn out as we desire, if it does not achieve victory tomorrow—what then? Then the masses will say to you, you acted like gamblers—you staked everything on a fortunate turn of events that did not take place, you proved unfitted for the situation that actually arose instead of the world revolution, which will inevitably come, but which has not yet reached maturity.

A period has set in of severe defeats, inflicted by imperialism, which is armed to the teeth, upon a country which has demobilised its army, which had to demobilise. What I predicted has come to pass; instead of the Brest peace we have a much more humiliating peace, and the blame for this rests upon those who refused

to accept the former peace. We knew that through the fault of the army we were concluding peace with imperialism. We sat at the table beside Hoffmann and not Liebknecht—and in doing so we assisted the German revolution. But now you are assisting German imperialism, because you have surrendered wealth valued at millions in guns and shells; and anybody who had seen the state—the incredible state—of the army could have predicted this. Everyone of integrity who came from the front said that had the Germans made the slightest attack we should have perished inevitably and absolutely. We should have fallen prey to the enemy within a few days.

Having been taught this lesson, we shall overcome our split, our crisis, however severe the disease may be, because an immeasurably more reliable ally will come to our assistance—the world revolution. When the ratification of this Peace of Tilsit,<sup>248</sup> this unbelievable peace, more humiliating and predatory than the Brest peace, is spoken of, I say: certainly, yes. We must do this because we look at things from the point of view of the masses. Any attempt to apply the tactics applied internally in one country between October and November—the triumphant period of the revolution—to apply them with the aid of our imagination to the progress of events in the world revolution, is doomed to failure. When it is said that the respite is a fantasy, when a newspaper called *Kommunist*<sup>249</sup>—from the word “Commune”, I suppose—when this paper fills column after column with attempts to refute the respite theory, I say that I have lived through quite a lot of factional conflicts and splits and so I have a great deal of experience; and I must say that it is clear to me that this disease will not be cured by the old method of factional Party splits because events will cure it more quickly. Life is marching forward very quickly. In this respect it is magnificent. History is driving its locomotive so fast that before the editors of *Kommunist* bring out their next issue the majority of the workers in Petrograd will have begun to be disappointed in its ideas, because events are proving that the respite is a fact. We are now signing a peace treaty, we have a respite, we are taking advantage of it the better to defend our fatherland—because had we been at war we should have had an army fleeing in panic which would have had to be stopped, and which our comrades cannot and could not stop, because war is more powerful than sermons, more powerful than ten thousand arguments. Since they did not understand the objective situation they could not hold back the army, and cannot do so. This sick army infected the whole organism, and another unparalleled defeat was inflicted upon us. German imperialism struck another blow at the revolution, a severe blow, because we allowed ourselves to face the blows of imperialism without

machine-guns. Meanwhile, we shall take advantage of this breathing-space to persuade the people to unite and fight, to say to the Russian workers and peasants: "Organise self-discipline, strict discipline, otherwise you will have to remain lying under the German jackboot as you are lying now, as you will inevitably have to lie until the people learn to fight and to create an army capable, not of running away, but of bearing untold suffering." It is inevitable, because the German revolution has not yet begun, and we cannot guarantee that it will come tomorrow.

That is why the respite theory, which is totally rejected in the flood of articles in *Kommunist*, is advanced by reality. Everyone can see that the respite is a fact, that everyone is taking advantage of it. We believed that we would lose Petrograd in a few days when the advancing German troops were only a few days' march away, and when our best sailors and the Putilov workers, notwithstanding all their great enthusiasm, remained alone, when incredible chaos and panic broke out, which compelled our troops to flee all the way to Gatchina, and when we had cases of positions being recaptured that had never been lost —by a telegraph operator, arriving at the station, taking his place at the key and wiring, "No Germans in sight. We have occupied the station." A few hours later I received a telephone communication from the Commissariat of Railways informing me, "We have occupied the next station. We are approaching Yamburg. No Germans in sight. Telegraph operator at his post." That is the kind of thing we had. This is the real history of the eleven days' war.<sup>250</sup> It was described to us by sailors and Putilov workers,<sup>251</sup> who ought to be brought to the Congress of Soviets. Let them tell the truth. It is a frightfully bitter, disappointing, painful and humiliating truth, but it is a hundred times more useful, it can be understood by the Russian people.

One may dream about the field revolution on a world-wide scale, for it will come. Everything will come in due time; but for the time being, set to work to establish self-discipline, subordination before all else, so that we can have exemplary order, so that the workers for at least one hour in twenty-four may train to fight. This is a little more difficult than relating beautiful fairy-tales. This is what we can do today; in this way you will help the German revolution, the world revolution. We do not know how many days the respite will last, but we have got it. We must demobilise the army as quickly as possible, because it is a sick organ; meanwhile, we will assist the Finnish revolution.

Yes, of course, we are violating the treaty; we have violated it thirty or forty times. Only children can fail to understand that in an epoch like the present, when a long painful period



of emancipation is setting in, which has only just created and raised the Soviet power three stages in its development—only children can fail to understand that in this case there must be a long, circumspect struggle. The shameful peace treaty is rousing protest, but when comrades from *Kommunist* talk about war they appeal to sentiment and forget that the people are clenching their fists with rage, are "seeing red". What do they say? "A class-conscious revolutionary will never live through this, will never submit to such a disgrace." Their newspaper bears the title *Kommunist*, but it should bear the title *Szlachcic*\* because it looks at things from the point of view of the *szlachcic* who, dying in a beautiful pose, sword in hand, said: "Peace is disgraceful, war is honourable." They argue from the point of view of the *szlachcic*; I argue from the point of view of the peasant.

If I accept peace when the army is in flight, and must be in flight if it is not to lose thousands of men, I accept it in order to prevent things from getting worse. Is the treaty really shameful? Why, every sober-minded peasant and worker will say I am right, because they understand that peace is a means of gathering forces. History knows—I have referred to it more than once—the case of the liberation of the Germans from Napoleon after the Peace of Tilsit. I deliberately called the peace a Peace of Tilsit although we did not undertake to do what had been stipulated in that treaty, we did not undertake to provide troops to assist the victor to conquer other nations—things like that have happened in history, and will happen to us if we continue to place our hopes in the field revolution on a world-wide scale. Take care that history does not impose upon you this form of military slavery as well. And before the socialist revolution is victorious in all countries the Soviet Republic may be reduced to slavery. At Tilsit, Napoleon compelled the Germans to accept incredibly disgraceful peace terms. That peace had to be signed several times. The Hoffmann of those days—Napoleon—time and again caught the Germans violating the peace treaty, and the present Hoffmann will catch us at it. Only we shall take care that he does not catch us soon.

The last war has been a bitter, painful, but serious lesson for the Russian people. It has taught them to organise, to become disciplined, to obey, to establish a discipline that will be exemplary. Learn discipline from the Germans; for, if we do not, we, as a people, are doomed, we shall live in eternal slavery.

This way, and no other, has been the way of history. History tells us that peace is a respite for war, war is a means of obtain-

ing a somewhat better or somewhat worse peace. At Brest the relation of forces corresponded to a peace imposed upon the one who has been defeated, but it was not a humiliating peace. The relation of forces at Pskov corresponded to a disgraceful, more humiliating peace; and in Petrograd and Moscow, at the next stage, a peace four times more humiliating will be dictated to us. We do not say that the Soviet power is only a form, as our young Moscow friends<sup>252</sup> have said, we do not say that the content can be sacrificed for this or that revolutionary principle. We do say, let the Russian people understand that they must become disciplined and organised, and then they will be able to withstand all the Tilsit peace treaties. The whole history of wars of liberation shows that when these wars involved large masses liberation came quickly. We say, since history marches forward in this way, we shall have to abandon peace for war, and this may happen within the next few days. Everyone must be prepared. I have not the slightest shadow of doubt that the Germans are preparing near Narva, if it is true that it has not been taken, as all the newspapers say; if not in Narva, then near Narva, if not in Pskov, then near Pskov, the Germans are grouping their regular army, making ready their railways, to capture Petrograd at the next jump. And this beast can jump very well. He has proved that. He will jump again. There is not a shadow of doubt about that. That is why we must be prepared, we must not brag, but must be able to take advantage of even a single day of respite, because we can take advantage of even one day's respite to evacuate Petrograd, the capture of which will cause unprecedented suffering to hundreds of thousands of our proletarians. I say again that I am ready to sign, and that I consider it my duty to sign, a treaty twenty times, a hundred times more humiliating, in order to gain at least a few days in which to evacuate Petrograd, because by that I will alleviate the sufferings of the workers, who otherwise may fall under the yoke of the Germans; by that I facilitate the removal from Petrograd of all the materials, gunpowder, etc., which we need; because I am a defencist, because I stand for the preparation of an army, even in the most remote rear, where our present, demobilised, sick army is being healed.

We do not know how long the respite will last—we will try to take advantage of the situation. Perhaps the respite will last longer, perhaps it will last only a few days. Anything may happen, no one knows, or can know, because all the major powers are bound, restricted, compelled to fight on several fronts. Hoffmann's behaviour is determined first by the need to smash the Soviet Republic; secondly, by the fact that he has to wage war on a number of fronts, and thirdly, by the fact that the revolution

in Germany is maturing, is growing, and Hoffmann knows this. He cannot, as some assert, take Petrograd and Moscow this very minute. But he may do so tomorrow, that is quite possible. I repeat that at a moment when the army is obviously sick, when we are taking advantage of every opportunity, come what may, to get at least one day's respite, we say that every serious revolutionary who is linked with the masses and who knows what war is, what the masses are, must discipline the masses, must heal them, must try to arouse them for a new war—every such revolutionary will admit that we are right, will admit that any disgraceful peace is proper, because it is in the interests of the proletarian revolution and the regeneration of Russia, because it will help to get rid of the sick organ. As every sensible man understands, by signing this peace treaty we do not put a stop to our workers' revolution; everyone understands that by concluding peace with the Germans we do not stop rendering military aid; we are sending arms to the Finns, but not military units, which turn out to be unfit.

Perhaps we will accept war; perhaps tomorrow we will surrender even Moscow and then go over to the offensive; we will move our army against the enemy's army if the necessary turn in the mood of the people takes place. This turn is developing and perhaps much time is required, but it will come, when the great mass of the people will not say what they are saying now. I am compelled to accept the harshest peace terms because I cannot say to myself that this time has arrived. When the time of regeneration arrives everyone will realise it, will see that the Russian is no fool; he sees, he will understand that for the time being we must refrain, that this slogan must be carried through—and this is the main task of our Party Congress and of the Congress of Soviets.

We must learn to work in a new way. That is immensely more difficult, but it is by no means hopeless. It will not break Soviet power if we do not break it ourselves by utterly senseless adventurism. The time will come when the people will say, we will not permit ourselves to be tortured any longer. But this will take place only if we do not agree to this adventure but prove able to work under harsh conditions and under the unprecedentedly humiliating treaty we signed the other day, because a war, or a peace treaty, cannot solve such a historical crisis. Because of their monarchic organisation the German people were fettered in 1807, when after several humiliating peace treaties, which were transformed into respites to be followed by new humiliations and new infringements, they signed the Peace of Tilsit. The Soviet organisation of the people makes our task easier.

We should have but one slogan—to learn the art of war properly and put the railways in order. To wage a socialist revolutionary war without railways would be rank treachery. We must produce order and we must produce all the energy and all the strength that will produce the best that is in the revolution.

Grasp even an hour's respite if it is given you, in order to maintain contact with the remote rear and there create new armies. Abandon illusions for which real events have punished you and will punish you more severely in the future. An epoch of most grievous defeats is ahead of us, it is with us now, we must be able to reckon with it, we must be prepared for persistent work in conditions of illegality, in conditions of downright slavery to the Germans; it is no use painting it in bright colours, it is a real Peace of Tilsit. If we are able to act in this way, then, in spite of defeats, we shall be able to say with absolute certainty—victory will be ours. (*Applause.*)

A brief report published  
in *Pravda* No. 45,  
March 9 (February 24), 1918

## 2 REPLY TO THE DEBATE ON THE POLITICAL REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MARCH 8

Comrades, let me begin with some relatively minor remarks, let me begin from the end. At the end of his speech Comrade Bukharin went so far as to compare us to Petlyura. If he thinks that is so, how can he remain with us in the same party? Isn't it just empty talk? If things were really as he said, we should not, of course, be members of the same party. The fact that we are together shows that we are ninety per cent in agreement with Bukharin. It is true he added a few revolutionary phrases about our wanting to betray the Ukraine. I am sure it is not worth while talking about such obvious nonsense. I shall return to Comrade Ryazanov, and here I want to say that in the same way as an exception that occurs once in ten years proves the rule, so has Comrade Ryazanov chanced to say a serious word. (*Applause.*) He said that Lenin was surrendering space to gain time. That is almost philosophical reasoning. This time it happened that we heard from Comrade Ryazanov a serious phrase—true it is

only a phrase—which fully expresses the case; to gain time I want to surrender space to the actual victor. That and that alone is the whole point at issue. All else is mere talk—the need for a revolutionary war, rousing the peasantry, etc. When Comrade Bukharin pictures things as though there could not be two opinions as to whether war is possible and says—“ask any soldier” (I wrote down his actual words)—since he puts the question this way and wants to ask any soldier, I’ll answer him. “Any soldier” turned out to be a French officer that I had a talk with. That French officer looked at me, with anger in his eyes, of course—had I not sold Russia to the Germans?—and said: “I am a royalist, I am also a champion of the monarchy in France, a champion of the defeat of Germany, so don’t think I support Soviet power—who would, if he was a royalist?—but I favour your signing the Brest Treaty because it’s necessary.”<sup>253</sup> That’s “asking any soldier” for you. Any soldier would say what I have said—we had to sign the Brest Treaty. If it now emerges from Bukharin’s speech that our differences have greatly diminished, it is only because his supporters have concealed the chief point on which we differ.

Now that Bukharin is thundering against us for having demoralised the masses, he is perfectly correct, except that it is himself and not us that he is attacking. Who caused this mess in the Central Committee?—You, Comrade Bukharin. (*Laughter.*) No matter how much you shout “No”, the truth will out; we are here in our own comradely family, we are at our own Congress, we have nothing to hide, the truth must be told. And the truth is that there were three trends in the Central Committee. On February 17 Lomov and Bukharin did not vote. I have asked for the record of the voting to be reproduced and copies made so that every Party member who wishes to do so can go into the secretariat and see how people voted—the historic voting of January 21, which shows that they wavered and we did not, not in the least; we said, “Let us accept the Brest peace—you’ll get nothing better—so as to prepare for a revolutionary war”. Now we have gained five days in which to evacuate Petrograd. Now the manifesto signed by Krylenko and Podvoisky<sup>254</sup> has been published; they were not among the Lefts, and Bukharin insulted them by saying that Krylenko had been “dragged in”, as though we had invented what Krylenko reported. We agree in full with what they said; that is how matters stand, for it was these army men who gave proof of what I had said; and you dismiss the matter by saying the Germans won’t attack. How can this situation be compared with October, when the question of equipment did not arise? If you want to take facts into consideration, then consider this one—that the disagreement arose over the statement

that we cannot start a war that is obviously to our disadvantage. When Comrade Bukharin began his concluding speech with the thunderous question "Is war possible in the near future?" he greatly surprised me. I answer without hesitation—yes, it is possible, but today we must accept peace. There is no contradiction in this.

After these brief remarks I shall give detailed answers to previous speakers. As far as Radek is concerned I must make an exception. But there was another speech, that of Comrade Uritsky. What was there in that speech apart from Canossa,<sup>255</sup> "treachery", "retreated", "adapted"? What is all this about? Haven't you borrowed your criticism from a Left Socialist-Revolutionary newspaper? Comrade Bubnov read us a statement submitted to the Central Committee by those of its members who consider themselves very Left-wing and who gave us a striking example of a demonstration before the eyes of the whole world—"the behaviour of the Central Committee strikes a blow at the international proletariat". Is that anything but an empty phrase? "Demonstrate weakness before the eyes of the whole world!" How are we demonstrating? By proposing peace? Because our army has run away? Have we not proved that to begin war with Germany at this moment, and not to accept the Brest peace, would mean showing the world that our army is sick and does not want to give battle? Bubnov's statement was quite empty when he asserted that the wavering was entirely of our making—it was due to our army's being sick. Sooner or later, there had to be a respite. If we had had the correct strategy we should have had a month's breathing-space, but since your strategy was incorrect we have only five days—even that is good. The history of war shows that even days are sometimes enough to halt a panic-stricken army. Anyone who does not accept, does not conclude this devilish peace now, is a man of empty phrases and not a strategist. That is the pity of it. When Central Committee members write to me about "demonstrations of weakness", "treachery", they are writing the most damaging, empty, childish phrases. We demonstrated our weakness by attempting to fight at a time when the demonstration should not have been made, when an offensive against us was inevitable. As for the peasants of Pskov, we shall bring them to the Congress of Soviets to relate how the Germans treat people, so that they can change the mood of the soldier in panic-stricken flight and he will begin to recover from his panic and say, "This is certainly not the war the Bolsheviks promised to put an end to, this is a new war the Germans are waging against Soviet power." Then recovery will come. But you raise a question that cannot be answered. Nobody knows how long the respite will last.

Now I must say something about Comrade Trotsky's position. There are two aspects to his activities; when he began the negotiations at Brest and made splendid use of them for agitation, we all agreed with Comrade Trotsky. He has quoted part of a conversation with me, but I must add that it was agreed between us that we would hold out until the Germans presented an ultimatum, and then we would give way. The Germans deceived us—they stole five days out of seven from us<sup>256</sup> Trotsky's tactics were correct as long as they were aimed at delaying matters; they became incorrect when it was announced that the state of war had been terminated but peace had not been concluded. I proposed quite definitely that peace be concluded. We could not have got anything better than the Brest peace. It is now clear to everybody that we would have had a month's respite and that we would not have lost anything. Since history has swept that away it is not worth recalling, but it is funny to hear Bukharin say, "Events will show that we were right." I was right because I wrote about it back in 1915—"We must prepare to wage war, it is inevitable, it is coming, it will come."<sup>\*</sup> But we had to accept peace and not try vain blustering. And because war is coming, it was all the more necessary to accept peace, and now we are at least making easier the evacuation of Petrograd—we have made it easier. That is a fact. And when Comrade Trotsky makes fresh demands, "promise not to conclude peace with Vinnichenko", I say that under no circumstances will I take that obligation upon myself.<sup>257</sup> If the Congress accepts this obligation, neither I, nor those who agree with me, will accept responsibility for it. It would mean tying our hands again with a formal decision instead of following a clear line of manoeuvre—retreat when possible, and at times attack. In war you must never tie yourself down with formal decisions. It is ridiculous not to know the history of war, not to know that a treaty is a means of gathering strength—I have already mentioned Prussian history. There are some people who are just like children, they think that if we have signed a treaty we have sold ourselves to Satan and have gone to hell. That is simply ridiculous when it is quite obvious from the history of war that the conclusion of a treaty after defeat is a means of gathering strength. There have been cases in history of one war following immediately after another, we have all forgotten that, we see that the old war is turning into. . . .<sup>\*\*</sup> If you like, you can bind yourselves for ever with formal decisions and then hand over all the responsible posts to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 404.—Ed.

\*\* Several words are missing in the verbatim report.—Ed.

We shall not accept responsibility for it. There is not the least desire for a split here. I am sure that events will teach you—March 12 is not far away, and you will obtain plenty of material.<sup>258</sup>

Comrade Trotsky says that it will be treachery in the full sense of the word. I maintain that that is an absolutely wrong point of view. To demonstrate this concretely, I will give you an example: two men are walking together and are attacked by ten men, one fights and the other runs away—that is treachery; but suppose we have two armies of a hundred thousand each and there are five armies against them; one army is surrounded by two hundred thousand, and the other must go to its aid; knowing that the other three hundred thousand of the enemy are ambushed to trap it, should the second army go to the aid of the first? It should not. That is not treachery, that is not cowardice; a simple increase in numbers has changed all concepts, any soldier knows this; it is no longer a personal concept. By acting in this way I preserve my army; let the other army be captured, I shall be able to renew mine, I have allies, I shall wait till the allies arrive. That is the only way to argue; when military arguments are mixed up with others, you get nothing but empty phrases. That is not the way to conduct politics.

We have done everything that could be done. By signing the treaty we have saved Petrograd, even if only for a few days. (The secretaries and stenographers should not think of putting that on record.) The treaty requires us to withdraw our troops from Finland, troops that are clearly no good, but we are not forbidden to take arms into Finland. If Petrograd had fallen a few days ago, the city would have been in a panic and we should not have been able to take anything away; but in those five days we have helped our Finnish comrades—how much I shall not say, they know it themselves.

The statement that we have betrayed Finland is just a childish phrase. We helped the Finns precisely by retreating before the Germans in good time. Russia will never perish just because Petrograd falls, Comrade Bukharin is a thousand times right in that, but if we manoeuvre in Bukharin's way we may ruin a good revolution. (*Laughter.*)

We have not betrayed either Finland or the Ukraine. No class-conscious worker would accuse us of this. We are helping as best we can. We have not taken one good man away from our army and shall not do so. You say that Hoffmann will catch us—of course he may, I do not doubt it, but how many days it will take him, he does not know and nobody knows. Furthermore, your arguments about his catching us are argu-



ments about the political alignment of forces, of which I shall speak later.

Now that I have explained why I am absolutely unable to accept Trotsky's proposal—you cannot conduct politics in that way—I must say that Radek has given us an example of how far the comrades at our Congress have departed from empty phrases such as Uritsky still sticks to. I certainly cannot accuse him of empty phrases in that speech. He said, "There is not a shadow of treachery, not a shadow of disgrace, because it is clear that you retreated in the face of overpowering military force." That is an appraisal that destroys Trotsky's position. When Radek said, "We must grit our teeth and prepare our forces," he was right—I agree with that in full—don't bluster, grit your teeth and make preparations.

Grit your teeth, don't bluster and muster your forces. The revolutionary war will come, there is no disagreement on this; the difference of opinion is on the Peace of Tilsit—should we conclude it or not? The worst of it is that we have a sick army, and the Central Committee, therefore, must have a firm line and not differences of opinion or the middle line that Comrade Bukharin also supported. I am not painting the respite in bright colours; nobody knows how long it will last and I don't know. The efforts that are being made to force me to say how long it will last are ridiculous. As long as we hold the main lines we are helping the Ukraine and Finland. We are taking advantage of the respite, manoeuvring and retreating.

The German worker cannot now be told that the Russians are being awkward, for it is now clear that German and Japanese imperialism is attacking—it will be clear to everybody; apart from a desire to strangle the Bolsheviks, the Germans also want to do some strangling in the West, everything is all mixed up, and in this war we shall have to and must be able to manoeuvre.

With regard to Comrade Bukharin's speech, I must say that when he runs short of arguments he puts forward something in the Uritsky manner and says, "The treaty disgraces us." Here no arguments are needed; if we have been disgraced we should collect our papers and run, but, although we have been "disgraced", I do not think our position has been shaken. Comrade Bukharin attempted to analyse the class basis of our position, but instead of doing so told us an anecdote about a deceased Moscow economist. When you discovered some connection between our tactics and food speculation—this was really ridiculous—you forgot that the attitude of the class as a whole, the class, and not the food speculators, shows that the Russian bourgeoisie and their hangers-on—the *Dyelo Naroda* and *Novaya Zhizn* writers—are bending all their efforts to goad us on

to war. You do not stress that class fact. To declare war on Germany at the moment would be to fall for the provocation of the Russian bourgeoisie. That is not new because it is the surest—I do not say absolutely certain, because nothing is absolutely certain—the surest way of getting rid of us today. When Comrade Bukharin said that events were on their side, that in the long run we would recognise revolutionary war, he was celebrating an easy victory since we prophesied the inevitability of a revolutionary war in 1915. Our differences were on the following—would the Germans attack or not; that we should have declared the state of war terminated; that in the interests of revolutionary war we should have to retreat, surrendering territory to gain time. Strategy and politics prescribe the most disgusting peace treaty imaginable. Our differences will all disappear once we recognise these tactics.

A brief report published  
in the newspaper *Raboché-Krestyansky*  
*Nizhegorodsky Listok* No 54,  
March 19(6), 1918

### 3

## RESOLUTION ON WAR AND PEACE

The Congress recognises the necessity to confirm the extremely harsh, humiliating peace treaty with Germany that has been concluded by Soviet power in view of our lack of an army, in view of the most unhealthy state of the demoralised army at the front, in view of the need to take advantage of any, even the slightest, possibility of obtaining a respite before imperialism launches its offensive against the Soviet Socialist Republic.

In the present period of the era that has begun, the era of the socialist revolution, numerous military attacks on Soviet Russia by the imperialist powers (both from the West and from the East) are historically inevitable. The historical inevitability of such attacks at a time when both internal, class relations and international relations are extremely tense, can at any moment, even immediately, within the next few days, lead to fresh imperialist aggressive wars against the socialist movement in general and against the Russian Socialist Soviet Republic in particular.

The Congress therefore declares that it recognises the primary and fundamental task of our Party, of the entire vanguard of the class-conscious proletariat and of Soviet power, to be the adoption of the most energetic, ruthlessly determined and Dra-

conian measures to improve the self-discipline and discipline of the workers and peasants of Russia, to explain the inevitability of Russia's historic advance towards a socialist, patriotic war of liberation, to create everywhere soundly co-ordinated mass organisations held together by a single iron will, organisations that are capable of concerted, valorous action in their day-to-day efforts and especially at critical moments in the life of the people, and, lastly, to train systematically and comprehensively in military matters and military operations the entire adult population of both sexes.

The Congress considers the only reliable guarantee of consolidation of the socialist revolution that has been victorious in Russia to be its conversion into a world working-class revolution.

The Congress is confident that the step taken by Soviet power in view of the present alignment of forces in the world arena was, from the standpoint of the interests of the world revolution, inevitable and necessary.

Confident that the working-class revolution is maturing persistently in all belligerent countries and is preparing the full and inevitable defeat of imperialism, the Congress declares that the socialist proletariat of Russia will support the fraternal revolutionary movement of the proletariat of all countries with all its strength and with every means at its disposal.

Written not later than March 8, 1918

First published on January 1, 1919  
in the newspaper *Kommunar* No 1

#### 4

### ADDENDUM TO THE RESOLUTION ON WAR AND PEACE MARCH 8

The Congress deems it essential not to publish the resolution that has been adopted and requires of all Party members that they keep this resolution secret. The only communication to be made to the press—and that not today but on the instructions of the Central Committee—will be that the Congress is in favour of ratification.

Furthermore, the Congress lays special stress on the authority granted to the Central Committee to denounce at any moment all peace treaties concluded with imperialist and bourgeois states, and also to declare war on them.

## 5

# REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME AND ON CHANGING THE NAME OF THE PARTY MARCH 8

Comrades, as you know, a fairly comprehensive Party discussion on changing the name of the Party has developed since April 1917 and the Central Committee has therefore been able to arrive at an immediate decision that will probably not give rise to considerable dispute—there may even be practically none at all; the Central Committee proposes to you that the name of our Party be changed to the Russian Communist Party, with the word “Bolsheviks” added to it in brackets. We all recognise the necessity for this addition because the word “Bolshevik” has not only acquired rights of citizenship in the political life of Russia but also throughout the entire foreign press, which in a general way keeps track of events in Russia. It has already been explained in our press that the name “Social-Democratic Party” is scientifically incorrect. When the workers set up their own state they realised that the old concept of democracy—bourgeois democracy—had been surpassed in the process of the development of our revolution. We have arrived at a type of democracy that has never existed anywhere in Western Europe. It has its prototype only in the Paris Commune, and Engels said with regard to the Paris Commune that it was not a state in the proper sense of the word.<sup>259</sup> In short, since the working people themselves are undertaking to administer the state and establish armed forces that support the given state system, the special government apparatus is disappearing, the special apparatus for a certain state coercion is disappearing, and we cannot therefore uphold democracy in its old form.

On the other hand, as we begin socialist reforms we must have a clear conception of the goal towards which these reforms are in the final analysis directed, that is, the creation of a communist society that does not limit itself to the expropriation of factories, the land and the means of production, does not confine itself to strict accounting for, and control of, production and distribution of products, but goes farther towards implementing the principle “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”. That is why the name of Communist Party is the only one that is scientifically correct. The objection that it may cause us to be confused with the anarchists

was immediately rejected by the Central Committee on the grounds that the anarchists never call themselves simply Communists but always add something to that name. In this respect we may mention the many varieties of socialism, but they do not cause the confusion of the Social-Democrats with social-reformers, or national socialists, or any similar parties.

On the other hand, the most important argument in favour of changing the name of the Party is that up to now the old official socialist parties in all the leading European countries have still not got rid of their intoxication with social-chauvinism and social-patriotism that led to the complete collapse of European official socialism during the present war, so that up to now almost all official socialist parties have been a real hindrance to the working-class revolutionary socialist movement, a real encumbrance to it. And our Party, which at the present time undoubtedly enjoys the greatest sympathy of the masses of the working people of all countries—our Party must make the most decisive, sharp, clear and unambiguous statement that is possible to the effect that it has broken off connections with that old official socialism, for which purpose a change in the name of the Party will be the most effective means.

Further, comrades, the much more difficult question was that of the theoretical part of the Programme and of its practical and political part. As far as the theoretical part of the Programme is concerned, we have some material—the Moscow and Petrograd symposia on the review of the Programme, which have been published; the two main theoretical organs of our Party, *Prosveshcheniye* published in Petrograd, and *Spartak*<sup>260</sup> published in Moscow, have carried articles substantiating certain trends in changing the theoretical part of the Programme of our Party. In this sphere we have a certain amount of material. Two main points of view are to be seen which, in my opinion, do not diverge, at any rate radically, on matters of principle; one point of view, the one I defended, is that we have no reason to reject the old theoretical part of our Programme, and that it would be actually incorrect to do so. We have only to add to it an analysis of imperialism as the highest stage of the development of capitalism and also an analysis of the era of the socialist revolution, proceeding from the fact that the era of the socialist revolution has begun. Whatever may be the fate of our revolution, of our contingent of the international proletarian army, whatever may be the future complications of the revolution, the objective situation of the imperialist countries embroiled in a war that has reduced the most advanced countries to starvation, ruin and barbarity, that situation, in any case, is hopeless. And here I must repeat what Frederick Engels said

thirty years ago, in 1887, when appraising the probable prospects of a European war. He said that crowns would lie around in Europe by the dozen and nobody would want to pick them up; he said that incredible ruin would fall to the lot of the European countries, and that there could be only one outcome to the horrors of a European war—he put it this way—“either the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions that would make that victory possible and necessary”.<sup>261</sup> Engels expressed himself on this score with exceptional precision and caution. Unlike those people who distort Marxism and offer their belated pseudo-philosophising about socialism being impossible in conditions of ruin, Engels realised full well that every war, even in an advanced society, would create not only devastation, barbarity, torment, calamities for the masses, who would drown in blood, and that there could be no guarantee that it would lead to the victory of socialism; he said it would be “either the victory of the working class or the creation of conditions that would make that victory possible and necessary”, i.e., that there was, consequently, the possibility of a number of difficult stages of transition in view of the tremendous destruction of culture and the means of production, but that the result could be only the rise of the working class, the vanguard of all working people, and the beginning of its taking over power into its own hands for the creation of a socialist society. For no matter to what extent culture has been destroyed, it cannot be removed from history; it will be difficult to restore but no destruction will ever mean the complete disappearance of that culture. Some part of it, some material remains of that culture will be indestructible, the difficulties will be only in restoring it. There you have one point of view—that we must retain the old Programme and add to it an analysis of imperialism and of the beginning of the social revolution.

I expressed that point of view in the draft Programme that I have published.\* Another draft was published by Comrade Sokolnikov in the Moscow symposium. The second point of view has been expressed in our private conversations, in particular by Comrade Bukharin, and by Comrade V. Smirnov in the press, in the Moscow symposium. This point of view is that the old theoretical part of our Programme should be completely or almost completely eliminated and replaced by a new part that does not analyse the development of commodity production and capitalism, as the present Programme does, but analyses the contemporary, highest stage of capitalist development—imperialism—and the immediate transition to the epoch of the social

revolution. I do not think that these two points of view diverge radically and in principle, but I shall defend my point of view. It seems to me that it would be theoretically incorrect to eliminate the old programme that analyses the development from commodity production to capitalism. There is nothing incorrect in it. That is how things were and how they are, for commodity production begot capitalism and capitalism led to imperialism. Such is the general historical perspective, and the fundamentals of socialism should not be forgotten. No matter what the further complications of the struggle may be, no matter what occasional zigzags we may have to contend with (there will be very many of them—we have seen from experience what gigantic turns the history of the revolution has made, and so far it is only in our own country; matters will be much more complicated and proceed much more rapidly, the rate of development will be more furious and the turns will be more intricate when the revolution becomes a European revolution)—in order not to lose our way in these zigzags, these sharp turns in history, in order to retain the general perspective, to be able to see the scarlet thread that joins up the entire development of capitalism and the entire road to socialism, the road we naturally imagine as straight, and which we must imagine as straight in order to see the beginning, the continuation and the end—in real life it will never be straight, it will be incredibly involved—in order not to lose our way in these twists and turns, in order not to get lost at times when we are taking steps backward, times of retreat and temporary defeat or when history or the enemy throws us back—in order not to get lost, it is, in my opinion, important not to discard our old, basic Programme; the only theoretically correct line is to retain it. Today we have reached only the first stage of transition from capitalism to socialism here in Russia. History has not provided us with that peaceful situation that was theoretically assumed for a certain time, and which is desirable for us, and which would enable us to pass through these stages of transition speedily. We see immediately that the civil war has made many things difficult in Russia, and that the civil war is interwoven with a whole series of wars. Marxists have never forgotten that violence must inevitably accompany the collapse of capitalism in its entirety and the birth of socialist society. That violence will constitute a period of world history, a whole era of various kinds of wars, imperialist wars, civil wars inside countries, the intermingling of the two, national wars liberating the nationalities oppressed by the imperialists and by various combinations of imperialist powers that will inevitably enter into various alliances in the epoch of tremendous state-capitalist and military trusts and syndicates. This epoch, an

epoch of gigantic cataclysms, of mass decisions forcibly imposed by war, of crises, has begun—that we can see clearly—and it is only the beginning. We therefore have no reason to discard everything bearing on the definition of commodity production in general, of capitalism in general. We have only just taken the first steps towards shaking off capitalism altogether and beginning the transition to socialism. We do not know and we cannot know how many stages of transition to socialism there will be. That depends on when the full-scale European socialist revolution begins and on whether it will deal with its enemies and enter upon the smooth path of socialist development easily and rapidly or whether it will do so slowly. We do not know this, and the programme of a Marxist party must be based on facts that have been established with absolute certainty. The power of our Programme—the programme that has found its confirmation in all the complications of the revolution—is in that alone. Marxists must build up their programme on this basis alone. We must proceed from facts that have been established with absolute certainty, facts that show how the development of exchange and commodity production became a dominant historical phenomenon throughout the world, how it led to capitalism and capitalism developed into imperialism; that is an absolutely definite fact that must first and foremost be recorded in our Programme. That imperialism begins the era of the social revolution is also a fact, one that is obvious to us, and about which we must speak clearly. By stating this fact in our Programme we are holding high the torch of the social revolution before the whole world, not as an agitational speech, but as a new Programme that says to the peoples of Western Europe, “Here is what you and we have gathered from the experience of capitalist development. This is what capitalism was, this is how it developed into imperialism, and here is the epoch of the social revolution that is beginning, and in which it is our lot to play, chronologically, the first role.” We shall proclaim this manifesto before all civilised countries; it will not only be a fervent appeal but will be substantiated with absolute accuracy and will derive from facts recognised by all socialist parties. It will make all the clearer the contradiction between the tactics of those parties that have now betrayed socialism and the theoretical premises which we all share, and which have entered the flesh and blood of every class-conscious worker—the rise of capitalism and its development into imperialism. On the eve of imperialist wars the congresses at Chemnitz and Basle passed resolutions defining imperialism, and there is a flagrant contradiction between that definition and the present tactics of the social-traitors.<sup>262</sup> We must, therefore, repeat that which is basic in order to show the working



people of Western Europe all the more clearly what we accuse their leaders of.

Such is the basis which I consider to be the only theoretically correct one on which to build a programme. The abandoning of the analysis of commodity production and capitalism as though it were old rubbish is not dictated by the historical nature of what is now happening, since we have not gone farther than the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism, and our transition is made more intricate by features that are specific to Russia and do not exist in most civilised countries. And so it is not only possible but inevitable that the stages of transition will be different in Europe; it would be theoretically incorrect to turn all attention to specific national stages of transition that are essential to us but may not be essential in Europe. We must begin with the general basis of the development of commodity production, the transition to capitalism and the growth of capitalism into imperialism. In this way we shall occupy and strengthen a theoretical position from which nobody without betraying socialism can shift us. From this we draw the equally inevitable conclusion—the era of the social revolution is beginning.

We draw this conclusion without departing from our basis of definitely proved facts.

Following this, our task is to define the Soviet type of state. I have tried to outline theoretical views on this question in my book *The State and Revolution*.\* It seems to me that the Marxist view on the state has been distorted in the highest degree by the official socialism that is dominant in Western Europe, and that this has been splendidly confirmed by the experience of the Soviet revolution and the establishment of the Soviets in Russia. There is much that is crude and unfinished in our Soviets, there is no doubt about that, it is obvious to everyone who examines their work; but what is important, has historical value and is a step forward in the world development of socialism, is that they are a new type of state. The Paris Commune was a matter of a few weeks, in one city, without the people being conscious of what they were doing. The Commune was not understood by those who created it; they established the Commune by following the unfailing instinct of the awakened people, and neither of the groups of French socialists was conscious of what it was doing. Because we are standing on the shoulders of the Paris Commune and the many years of development of German Social-Democracy, we have conditions that enable us to see clearly what we are doing in creating Soviet power. Despite all the crudity and lack of discipline that exist in the Soviets—this is a

---

\* See pp. 238-327 of the present volume.—Ed.

survival of the petty-bourgeois nature of our country—despite all that the new type of state has been created by the masses of the people. It has been functioning for months and not weeks, and not in one city, but throughout a tremendous country, populated by several nations. This type of Soviet power has shown its value since it has spread to Finland, a country that is different in every respect, where there are no Soviets but where there is, at any rate, a new type of power, proletarian power.<sup>263</sup> This is, therefore, proof of what is theoretically regarded as indisputable—that Soviet power is a new type of state without a bureaucracy, without police, without a regular army a state in which bourgeois democracy has been replaced by a new democracy, a democracy that brings to the fore the vanguard of the working people, gives them legislative and executive authority, makes them responsible for military defence and creates state machinery that can re-educate the masses.

In Russia this has scarcely begun and has begun badly. If we are conscious of what is bad in what we have begun we shall overcome it, provided history gives anything like a decent time to work on that Soviet power. I am therefore of the opinion that a definition of the new type of state should occupy an outstanding place in our Programme. Unfortunately we had to work on our Programme in the midst of governmental work and under conditions of such great haste that we were not even able to convene our commission, to elaborate an official draft programme. What has been distributed among the delegates is only a rough sketch,\* and this will be obvious to everyone. A fairly large amount of space has been allotted in it to the question of Soviet power, and I think that it is here that the international significance of our Programme will make itself felt. I think it would be very wrong of us to confine the international significance of our revolution to slogans, appeals, demonstrations, manifestos, etc. That is not enough. We must show the European workers exactly what we have set about, how we have set about it, how it is to be understood; that will bring them face to face with the question of how socialism is to be achieved. They must see for themselves—the Russians have started on something worth doing; if they are setting about it badly we must do it better. For that purpose we must provide as much concrete material as possible and say what we have tried to create that is new. We have a new type of state in Soviet power; we shall try to outline its purpose and structure, we shall try to explain why this new type of democracy in which there is so much that is chaotic and irrational, to explain what makes up its living spirit—the transfer

of power to the working people, the elimination of exploitation and the machinery of suppression. The state is the machinery of suppression. The exploiters must be suppressed, but they cannot be suppressed by police, they must be suppressed by the masses themselves, the machinery must be linked with the masses, must represent them as the Soviets do. They are much closer to the masses, they provide an opportunity to keep closer to the masses, they provide greater opportunities for the education of those masses. We know very well that the Russian peasant is anxious to learn; and we want him to learn, not from books, but from his own experience. Soviet power is machinery, machinery that will enable the masses to begin right away learning to govern the state and organise production on a nation-wide scale. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. It is, however, historically important that we are setting about its fulfilment, and not only from the point of view of our one country; we are calling upon European workers to help. We must give a concrete explanation of our Programme from precisely that common point of view. That is why we consider it a continuation of the road taken by the Paris Commune. That is why we are confident that the European workers will be able to help once they have entered on that path. They will do what we are doing, but do it better, and the centre of gravity will shift from the formal point of view to the concrete conditions. In the old days the demand for freedom of assembly was a particularly important one, whereas our point of view on freedom of assembly is that nobody can now prevent meetings, and Soviet power has only to provide premises for meetings. General proclamations of broad principles are important to the bourgeoisie: "All citizens have freedom to assemble, but they must assemble in the open, we shall not give them premises." But we say: "Fewer empty phrases, and more substance." The palaces must be expropriated—not only the Taurida Palace, but many others as well—and we say nothing about freedom of assembly. That must be extended to all other points in the democratic programme. We must be our own judges. All citizens must take part in the work of the courts and in the government of the country. It is important for us to draw literally all working people into the government of the state. It is a task of tremendous difficulty. But socialism cannot be implemented by a minority, by the Party. It can be implemented only by tens of millions when they have learned to do it themselves. We regard it as a point in our favour that we are trying to help the masses themselves set about it immediately, and not to learn to do it from books and lectures. If we state these tasks of ours clearly and definitely we shall thereby give an impetus to the discussion of the question and its practical presentation by the Eu-

ropean masses. We are perhaps making a bad job of what has to be done, but we are urging the masses to do what they have to. If what our revolution is doing is not accidental (and we are firmly convinced that it is not), if it is not the product of a Party decision but the inevitable product of any revolution that Marx called "popular", i.e., a revolution that the masses themselves create by their slogans, their efforts and not by a repetition of the programme of the old bourgeois republic—if we present matters in this way, we shall have achieved the most important thing. And here we come to the question of whether we should abolish the difference between the maximum and minimum programmes. Yes and no. I do not fear this abolition, because the viewpoint we held in summer should no longer exist. I said then, when we still had not taken power, that it was "too soon", but now that we have taken power and tested it, it is not too soon.\* In place of the old Programme we must now write a new Programme of Soviet power and not in any way reject the use of bourgeois parliamentarism. It is a utopia to think that we shall not be thrown back.

It cannot be denied historically that Russia has created a Soviet Republic. We say that if ever we are thrown back, while not rejecting the use of bourgeois parliamentarism—if hostile class forces drive us to that old position—we shall aim at what has been gained by experience, at Soviet power, at the Soviet type of state, at the Paris Commune type of state. That must be expressed in the Programme. In place of the minimum programme, we shall introduce the Programme of Soviet power. A definition of the new type of state must occupy an important place in our Programme.

It is obvious that we cannot elaborate a programme at the moment. We must work out its basic premises and hand them over to a commission or to the Central Committee for the elaboration of the main theses. Or still more simply—the elaboration is possible on the basis of the resolution on the Brest-Litovsk Conference, which has already provided theses.\*\* Such a definition of Soviet power should be given on the basis of the experience of the Russian revolution, and followed by a proposal for practical reforms. I think it is here, in the historical part, that mention should be made that the expropriation of the land and of industrial enterprises has begun. Here we shall present the concrete task of organising distribution, unifying the banks into one universal type and converting them into a network of state institutions covering the whole country and providing us

\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, pp. 169-73 —Ed.

\*\* See pp. 550-51 of the present volume —Ed.

with public book-keeping, accounting and control carried out by the population itself and forming the foundation for further socialist steps. I think that this part, being the most difficult, should be formulated as the concrete demands of our Soviet power—what we want to do at the moment, what reforms we intend to carry out in the sphere of banking policy, the organisation of production, the organisation of exchange, accountancy and control, the introduction of labour conscription, etc. When we are able to, we shall add what great or small measures or half-measures we have taken in that direction. Here we must state with absolute precision and clarity what has been begun and what has not been completed. We know full well that a large part of what has been begun has not been completed. Without any exaggeration, with full objectivity, without departing from the facts, we must state in our Programme what we have done and what we want to do. We shall show the European proletariat this truth and say, this must be done, so that they will say, such-and-such things the Russians are doing badly but we shall do them better. When this urge reaches the masses the socialist revolution will be invincible. The imperialist war is proceeding before the eyes of all people, a war that is nothing but a war of plunder. When the imperialist war exposes itself in the eyes of the world and becomes a war waged by all the imperialists against Soviet power, against socialism, it will give the proletariat of the West yet another push forward. That must be revealed, the war must be described as an alliance of the imperialists against the socialist movement. These are the general considerations that I think should be shared with you, and on the basis of which I now make the practical proposal to exchange basic views on that question and then, perhaps, elaborate a few fundamental theses here on the spot, and, if that should be found difficult, give up the idea and hand the question of the Programme over to the Central Committee or to a special commission that will be instructed, on the basis of the material available and of the shorthand or secretaries' detailed reports of the Congress, to draw up a Programme for the Party, which must immediately change its name. I am of the opinion that we can do this at the present time, and I think everybody will agree that with our Programme in the editorially unprepared state in which events found it, there is nothing else we can do. I am sure we can do this in a few weeks. We have a sufficient number of theoreticians in all the trends of our Party to obtain a programme in a few weeks. There may be much that is erroneous in it, of course, to say nothing of editorial and stylistic inaccuracies, because we have not got months in which to settle down to it with the composure that is necessary for editorial work.

We shall correct all these errors in the course of our work in the full confidence that we are giving Soviet power an opportunity to implement the programme. If we at least state precisely, without departing from reality, that Soviet power is a new type of state, a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that we present democracy with different tasks, that we have translated the tasks of socialism from a general abstract formula—"the expropriation of the expropriators"—into such concrete formulas as the nationalisation of the banks and the land, that will be an important part of the Programme.

The land question must be reshaped so that we can see in it the first steps of the small peasantry wanting to take the side of the proletariat and help the socialist revolution, see how the peasants, for all their prejudices and all their old convictions, have set themselves the practical task of the transition to socialism. This is a fact, although we shall not impose it on other countries. The peasantry have shown, not in words but by their deeds, that they wish to help and are helping the proletariat that has taken power to put socialism into effect. It is wrong to accuse us of wanting to introduce socialism by force. We shall divide up the land justly, mainly from the point of view of the small farm. In doing this we give preference to communes and big labour co-operatives. We support the monopolising of the grain trade. We support, the peasantry have said, the confiscation of banks and factories. We are prepared to help the workers in implementing socialism. I think a fundamental law on the socialisation of the land should be published in all languages. This will be done, if it has not been done already.<sup>264</sup> That is an idea we shall state concretely in the Programme—it must be expressed theoretically without departing one single step from concretely established facts. It will be done differently in the West. Perhaps we are making mistakes, but we hope that the proletariat of the West will correct them. And we appeal to the European proletariat to help us in our work.

In this way we can work out our Programme in a few weeks, and the mistakes we make will be corrected as time goes on—we shall correct them ourselves. Those mistakes will be as light as feathers compared with the positive results that will be achieved.

Brief summary published in  
the newspaper *Rabuche-Krestyansky*  
*Aizhegorodsky Listok* No. 55,  
March 20 (7), 1918

## 6 RESOLUTION ON CHANGING THE NAME OF THE PARTY AND THE PARTY PROGRAMME

The Congress resolves that our Party (the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of Bolsheviks) be named henceforth the *Russian Communist Party*, with the word "Bolsheviks" added in brackets.

The Congress resolves to change the Programme of our Party, re-editing the theoretical part or adding to it a definition of imperialism and the era of the international socialist revolution that has begun.

Following this, the change in the political part of our Programme must consist in the most accurate and comprehensive definition possible of the new type of state, the Soviet Republic, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat and as a continuation of those achievements of the world working-class revolution which the Paris Commune began. The Programme must show that our Party does not reject the use even of bourgeois parliamentarism, should the course of the struggle push us back, for a time, to this historical stage which our revolution has now passed. But in any case and under all circumstances the Party will strive for a Soviet Republic as the highest, from the standpoint of democracy, type of state, as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of abolition of the exploiters' yoke and of suppression of their resistance.

The economic, including agrarian, and educational and other parts of our Programme must be recast in the same spirit and direction. The centre of gravity must be a precise definition of the economic and other reforms begun by our Soviet power, with a definite statement of the immediate definite tasks which Soviet power has set itself, and which proceed from the practical steps we have already taken towards expropriating the expropriators.

The Congress instructs the special commission to compile, with the utmost urgency, a programme for our Party based on the points laid down and to have it approved as the Programme of our Party.

Written on March 3, 1918

Published in *Pravda* No 45  
March 3, 1918

## 7 RESOLUTION ON THE REFUSAL OF THE "LEFT COMMUNISTS" TO BE MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

The Congress is of the opinion that a refusal to enter the Central Committee in the situation at present obtaining in the Party is particularly undesirable, since such a refusal is in general impermissible in principle to those who desire the unity of the Party, and would today be a double threat to unity.

The Congress declares that everyone can and should deny his responsibility for any step taken by the Central Committee, if he does not agree with it, by means of a declaration to that effect but not by leaving the Central Committee.

The Congress is firm in the hope that the comrades will, after a consultation with the mass organisations, withdraw their resignation; the Congress will, therefore, carry through elections without taking the statement of resignation into consideration.

Written on March 8, 1918

First published with minor abridgements (except the "Resolution on the Refusal of the 'Left Communists' to be Members of the Central Committee") in 1923 in *The Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party* *Verbatim Report*, March 6-8, 1918

First published in full in 1928 in *The Minutes of Congresses and Conferences of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), The Seventh Congress*, March 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol. 21,  
pp. 87, 119, 123, 126, 41, 131



---

## THE CHIEF TASK OF OUR DAY

*Thou art wretched, thou art abundant,  
'Thou art mighty, thou art impotent  
—Mother Russia!*<sup>25</sup>

Human history these days is making a momentous and most difficult turn, a turn, one might say without the least exaggeration, of immense significance for the emancipation of the world. A turn from war to peace; a turn from a war between plunderers who are sending to the shambles millions of the working and exploited people for the sake of establishing a new system of dividing the spoils looted by the strongest of them, to a war of the oppressed against the oppressors for liberation from the yoke of capital; a turn from an abyss of suffering, anguish, starvation and degradation to the bright future of communist society, universal prosperity and enduring peace. No wonder that at the sharpest points of this sharp turn, when all around the old order is breaking down and collapsing with a terrible grinding crash, and the new order is being born amid indescribable suffering, there are some whose heads grow dizzy, some who are seized by despair, some who seek salvation from the at times too bitter reality in fine-sounding and alluring phrases.

It has been Russia's lot to see most clearly, and experience most keenly and painfully the sharpest of sharp turning-points in history as it swings round from imperialism towards the communist revolution. In the space of a few days we destroyed one of the oldest, most powerful, barbarous and brutal of monarchies. In the space of a few months we passed through a number of stages of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and of shaking off petty-bourgeois illusions, for which other countries have required decades. In the course of a few weeks, having overthrown the bourgeoisie, we crushed its open resistance in civil war. We passed in a victorious triumphal march of Bolshevism from one end of a vast country to the other. We raised the lowest strata of the working people oppressed by tsarism and the bourgeoisie to

liberty and independent life. We established and consolidated a Soviet Republic, a new type of state, which is infinitely superior to, and more democratic than, the best of the bourgeois-parliamentary republics. We established the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the poor peasantry, and began a broadly conceived system of socialist reforms. We awakened the faith of the millions upon millions of workers of all countries in their own strength and kindled the fires of enthusiasm in them. Everywhere we issued the call for a world workers' revolution. We flung a challenge to the imperialist plunderers of all countries.

Then in a few days we were thrown to the ground by an imperialist plunderer, who fell upon the unarmed. He compelled us to sign an incredibly burdensome and humiliating peace—as tribute for having dared to tear ourselves, even for the shortest space of time, from the iron clutches of an imperialist war. The more ominously the shadow of a workers' revolution in his own country rises before the plunderer, the greater his ferocity in crushing and stifling Russia and tearing her to pieces.

We were compelled to sign a "Tilsit" peace. We need no self-deception. We must courageously look the bitter, unadorned truth straight in the face. We must measure fully, to the very bottom, that abyss of defeat, dismemberment, enslavement, and humiliation into which we have now been pushed. The more clearly we understand this, the firmer, the more steeled and tempered will be our will to liberation, our aspiration to rise again from enslavement to independence, and our unbending determination to ensure that at any price Russia ceases to be wretched and impotent and becomes mighty and abundant in the full meaning of these words.

And mighty and abundant she can become, for, after all, we still have sufficient territory and natural wealth left to us to supply each and all, if not with abundant, at least with adequate means of life. Our natural wealth, our man-power and the splendid impetus which the great revolution has given to the creative powers of the people are ample material to build a truly mighty and abundant Russia.

Russia will become mighty and abundant if she abandons all dejection and all phrase-making, if, with clenched teeth, she musters all her forces and strains every nerve and muscle, if she realises that salvation lies *only* along that road of world socialist revolution upon which we have set out. March forward along that road, undismayed by defeats, lay the firm foundation of socialist society stone by stone, work with might and main to establish discipline and self-discipline, consolidate everywhere organisation, order, efficiency, and the harmonious co-operation of all the forces of the people, introduce comprehensive account-

ing of and control over production and distribution—such is the way to build up military and socialist might.

It would be unworthy of a genuine socialist who has suffered grave defeat either to bluster or to give way to despair. It is not true that our position is hopeless and that all that remains for us is to choose between an “inglorious” death (inglorious from the point of view of the *szlachcic*), such as this harsh peace represents, and a “gallant” death in a hopeless fight. It is not true that by signing a “Tilsit” peace we have betrayed our ideals or our friends. We have betrayed nothing and nobody, we have not sanctified or covered up any lie, we have not refused to help a single friend or comrade in misfortune in every way we could and with everything at our disposal. A general who withdraws the remnants of his army into the heart of the country when it has been beaten or is in panic-stricken flight, or who, in extremity, shields this retreat by a harsh and humiliating peace, is not guilty of treachery towards that part of his army which he is powerless to help and which has been cut off by the enemy. Such a general performs his duty by choosing the only way of saving what can still be saved, by refusing to gamble recklessly, by not embellishing the bitter truth for the people, by “surrendering space in order to gain time”, by taking advantage of *any and every* respite, even the briefest, in which to muster his forces and to allow his army to rest or recover, if it is affected by disintegration and demoralisation.

We have signed a “Tilsit” peace. When Napoleon I, in 1807, compelled Prussia to sign the Peace of Tilsit, the conqueror smashed the Germans’ entire army, occupied their capital and all their big cities, brought in his own police, compelled the vanquished to supply him, the conqueror, with auxiliary corps for fresh predatory wars, and partitioned Germany, concluding alliances with some German states against others. Nevertheless, the German people survived even *such* a peace, proved able to muster their forces, to rise and to win the right to liberty and independence.

To all those who are able and willing to think, the example of the Peace of Tilsit (which was only one of many harsh and humiliating treaties forced upon the Germans at that period) clearly shows how childish naïve is the idea that under all conditions a harsh peace means the bottomless pit of ruin, while war is the path of valour and salvation. Periods of war teach us that peace has not infrequently in history served as a respite and a means of mustering forces for new battles. The Peace of Tilsit was a supreme humiliation for Germany, but at the same time it marked a turn towards a supreme national resurgence. At that time historical conditions were such that this resurgence could be channelled only in the direction of a *bourgeois* state. At that

time, more than a hundred years ago, history was made by handfuls of nobles and a sprinkling of bourgeois intellectuals, while the worker and peasant masses were somnolent and dormant. As a result history at that time could only crawl along at a terribly slow pace.

But now capitalism has raised culture in general, and the culture of the masses in particular, to a much higher level. War has shaken up the masses, its untold horrors and suffering have awakened them. War has given history momentum and it is now flying with locomotive speed. History is now being independently made by millions and tens of millions of people. Capitalism has now matured for socialism.

Consequently, if Russia is now passing—as she undeniably is—from a “Tilsit” peace to a national resurgence, to a great patriotic war, the outlet for it is not in the direction of a bourgeois state, but in the direction of a world socialist revolution. Since October 25, 1917, we have been defencists. We are for “defence of the fatherland”; but that patriotic war towards which we are moving is a war for a socialist fatherland, for socialism as a fatherland, for the Soviet Republic as a *contingent* of the world army of socialism.

“Hate the Germans, kill the Germans”—such was, and is, the slogan of common, i.e., bourgeois, patriotism. But we will say “Hate the imperialist plunderers, hate capitalism, death to capitalism” and at the same time “Learn from the Germans! Remain true to the brotherly alliance with the German workers. They are late in coming to our aid. We shall gain time, we shall live to see them coming, and they *will come*, to our aid.”

Yes, learn from the Germans! History is moving in zigzags and by roundabout ways. It so happens that it is the Germans who now personify, besides a brutal imperialism, the principle of discipline, organisation, harmonious co-operation on the basis of modern machine industry, and strict accounting and control.

And that is just what we are lacking. That is just what we must learn. That is just what our great revolution needs in order to pass from a triumphant beginning, through a succession of severe trials, to its triumphant goal. That is just what the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic requires in order to cease being wretched and impotent and become mighty and abundant for all time.

March 11, 1918

---

# **EXTRAORDINARY FOURTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS<sup>266</sup>**

**MARCH 14-16, 1918**

## **REPORT ON RATIFICATION OF THE PEACE TREATY MARCH 14**

Comrades, today we have to settle a question that marks a turning-point in the development of the Russian revolution, and not only of the Russian but also of the international revolution, and in order to decide correctly on this very harsh peace which representatives of Soviet power have concluded at Brest-Litovsk, and which Soviet power asks you to approve, or ratify—in order to settle this question correctly it is more than ever necessary for us to get an understanding of the historical meaning of the turning-point we are at, an understanding of the main feature of the development of the revolution up to now and the main reason for the severe defeat and the period of stern trials we have passed through.

It seems to me that the chief source of disagreement among the Soviet parties<sup>267</sup> on this question is that some people too easily give way to a feeling of just and legitimate indignation over the defeat of the Soviet Republic by imperialism, too easily give way at times to despair instead of considering the historical conditions of the revolution as they developed up to the time of the present peace, and as they appear to us since the peace; instead of doing that they try to answer questions of the tactics of the revolution on the basis of their immediate feelings. The entire history of revolutions, however, teaches us that when we have to do with a mass movement or with the class struggle, especially one like that at present developing not only throughout a single country, albeit a tremendous country, but also involving all international relations—in such a case we must base our tactics first and foremost on an appraisal of the objective situation, we must examine analytically the course of the revolution up to this moment and

the reason it has taken a turn so menacing and so sharp, and so much to our disadvantage.

If we examine the development of our revolution from that point of view we see clearly that it has so far passed through a period of relative and largely imaginary self-dependence, and of being temporarily independent of international relations. The path travelled by our revolution from the end of February 1917 to February 11 of this year,<sup>268</sup> when the German offensive began, was, by and large, a path of easy and rapid successes. If we study the development of that revolution on an international scale, from the standpoint of the Russian revolution alone, we shall see that we have passed through three periods in the past year. The first period is that in which the working class of Russia, together with all advanced, class-conscious and active peasants, supported not only by the petty bourgeoisie but also by the big bourgeoisie, swept away the monarchy in a few days. This astounding success is to be explained by the fact that on the one hand, the Russian people had acquired a big reserve of revolutionary fighting potential from the experience of 1905, while on the other hand, Russia, an extremely backward country, had suffered more than any other from the war and had, at an especially early date, reached a stage when it was absolutely impossible to continue the war under the old regime.

This short tempestuous success when a new organisation was created—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—was followed by the long months of the period of transition of our revolution, the period in which the government of the bourgeoisie, immediately undermined by the Soviets, was kept going and strengthened by the petty-bourgeois compromising parties, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who supported it. It was a government that supported the imperialist war and the imperialist secret treaties, fed the working class on promises, did literally nothing, and preserved the state of economic ruin. The Soviets mustered their forces in this period, a period that for us, for the Russian revolution, was a long one; it was a long period for the Russian revolution but it was a short one from the international point of view, because in most of the leading countries the period of overcoming petty-bourgeois illusions, of compromise by various parties, groups and trends had been taking not months but long decades. The span of time, from April 20 to the moment Kerensky renewed the imperialist war in June (he had the secret imperialist treaty in his pocket), was decisive. This second period included our July defeat and the Kornilov revolt, and only through the experience of the mass struggle, only when the working-class and peasant masses had realised from their own experience and not from sermons that

petty-bourgeois compromise was all in vain—only then, after long political development, after long preparations and changes in the moods and views of party groups, was the ground made ready for the October Revolution; only then did the Russian revolution enter the third period of its initial stage, a stage of isolation, or temporary separation, from the world revolution.

This third, or October, period, the period of organisation, was the most difficult; at the same time it was a period of the biggest and most rapid triumphs. After October, our revolution—the revolution that placed power in the hands of the revolutionary proletariat, established its dictatorship and obtained for it the support of the vast majority of the proletariat and the poor peasantry—after October our revolution made a victorious, triumphal advance. Throughout Russia civil war began in the form of resistance by the exploiters, the landowners and bourgeoisie, supported by part of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Civil war broke out, and in that war the forces of the enemies of Soviet power, the forces of the enemies of the working and exploited masses, proved to be insignificant; the civil war was one continuous triumph for Soviet power because its opponents, the exploiters, the landowners and bourgeoisie, had neither political nor economic support, and their attacks collapsed. The struggle against them was not so much a military operation as agitation: section after section, mass after mass, down to the working Cossacks, abandoned the exploiters who were trying to lead them away from Soviet power.

This period of the victorious, triumphal advance of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet power, when great masses of the working and exploited people of Russia were drawn to the side of Soviet power definitely and irrevocably—this period constituted the final and highest point of development of the Russian revolution, which had been progressing all this time, apparently, independently of world imperialism. That was the reason why a country which was extremely backward and was the most prepared for the revolution by the experience of 1905 was able to promote one class after another to power rapidly, easily and systematically, getting rid of various political alignments until at last that political structure was reached which was the last word, not only in the Russian revolution, but also in the West-European workers' revolutions, for Soviet power has been consolidated in Russia and has won the absolute sympathy of the working and exploited people because it has destroyed the old state apparatus that was an instrument of oppression and has laid the foundation of a state of a new and higher form of which the Paris Commune was the prototype. The Commune destroyed the old state machine and replaced it by the armed force of the masses

themselves, replaced bourgeois parliamentary democracy by the democracy of the working people, which excluded the exploiters and systematically suppressed their resistance.

That is what the Russian revolution did in this period and that is why a small vanguard of the Russian revolution is under the impression that this rapid triumphal advance can be expected to continue in further victory. That is precisely their mistake because the period when the Russian revolution was developing, passing state power in Russia from one class to another and getting rid of class compromise within the bounds of Russia alone—this period was able to exist historically only because the predatory giants of world imperialism were temporarily halted in their advance against Soviet power. A revolution that overthrew the monarchy in a few days, exhausted all possibilities of compromise with the bourgeoisie in a few months and overcame all the resistance by the bourgeoisie in a civil war of a few weeks, this revolution, the revolution of a socialist republic, could live side by side with the imperialist powers, among the international plunderers, the wild beasts of international imperialism, only so long as the bourgeoisie, locked in mortal struggle with each other, were paralysed in their offensive against Russia.

And then began the period that we feel so keenly and see before our eyes, the period of disastrous defeats and severe trials for the Russian revolution, the period in which the swift, direct and open offensive against the enemies of the revolution is over while in its place we are experiencing disastrous defeats and have to retreat before forces that are immeasurably greater than ours, before the forces of international imperialism and finance capital, before the military might that the entire bourgeoisie with its modern weapons and its organisation has mustered against us in the interests of plunder, oppression and the strangling of small nations; we had to think of bringing our forces up to their level; we had to face a task of tremendous difficulty, that of direct combat with enemies that differed from Romanov and Kerensky who could not be taken seriously; we had to meet the forces of the international imperialist bourgeoisie, all its military might, we had to stand face to face with the world plunderers. In view of the delay in getting help from the international socialist proletariat we naturally had to take upon ourselves a conflict with these forces and we suffered a disastrous defeat.

And this epoch is one of disastrous defeats, an epoch of retreat, an epoch in which we must save at least a small part of our position by retreating before imperialism, by awaiting the time when there will be changes in the world situation in general, when the forces of the European proletariat arrive, the forces that exist and are maturing but which have not been able to deal with their enemy



as easily as we did with ours; it would be a very great illusion, a very great mistake, to forget that it was easy for the Russian revolution to begin but difficult for it to take further steps. This was inevitable because we had to begin with the most backward and most rotten political system. The European revolution will have to begin against the bourgeoisie, against a much more serious enemy and under immeasurably more difficult conditions. It will be much more difficult for the European revolution to begin. We see that it is immeasurably more difficult to make the first breach in the system that is holding back the revolution. It will be much easier for the European revolution to advance to the second and third stages. Things cannot be different with the alignment of forces of the revolutionary and reactionary classes that at present obtains in the world. This is the main turn in events that is always overlooked by people who view the present situation, the extremely serious position of the revolution, from the standpoint of their own feelings and their indignation, and not from the historical standpoint. Historical experience teaches us that always, in all revolutions, at a time when a revolution takes an abrupt turn from swift victory to severe defeats, there comes a period of pseudo-revolutionary phrase-making that invariably causes the greatest damage to the development of the revolution. And so, comrades, we shall be able to appraise our tactics correctly only when we set out to consider the turn in events that has hurled us back from swift, easy and complete victories to grave defeats. This is an extremely difficult and extremely serious question arising out of the present turning-point in the development of the revolution, the turn from easy victories within the country to exceptionally heavy defeats without; it is also a turning-point in the entire world revolution, a turn from the period of propaganda and agitation on the part of the Russian revolution, with imperialism biding its time, to the offensive of imperialism against Soviet power, and this turn puts a particularly difficult and acute question before the international movement in Western Europe. If we are not to ignore this historical aspect of the situation we must try to understand how Russia's basic interests in the question of the present harsh, or obscene, as it is called, peace took shape.

When arguing against those who refused to see the need to accept that peace, I have often come up against the statement that the idea of concluding the peace expresses only the interests of the exhausted peasant masses, the declassed soldiers and so on and so forth. Whenever I hear such statements, whenever I hear such things referred to, I am always amazed that the class aspect of national development is forgotten by comrades—people who limit themselves exclusively to seeking explanations. As though the Party of the proletariat on taking power had not counted on the

alliance of the proletariat and the semi-proletariat, i.e., the poor peasantry (i.e., the majority of the peasantry of Russia), had not known that only such an alliance would be able to hand the government of Russia over to the revolutionary power of the Soviets, the power of the majority, the real majority of the people, and that without this alliance it would be senseless to make any attempt to establish power, especially at difficult turning-points in history! As though we could now abandon this verity that was accepted by all of us and confine ourselves to a contemptuous reference to the exhausted state of the peasantry and the declassed soldiers! With regard to the exhausted state of the peasantry and the declassed soldiers we must say that the country will offer resistance, and that the poor peasants will be able to offer resistance only in so far as those poor peasants are capable of directing their forces to the struggle.

When we were about to take power in October it was obvious that events were inevitably leading up to it, that the turn towards Bolshevism in the Soviets indicated a turn throughout the country, and that the Bolsheviks must inevitably take power. When we, realising this, took power in October, we said to ourselves and to all the people, very clearly and unequivocally, that it was a transfer of power to the proletariat and the poor peasantry, that the proletariat knew the peasantry would support it—you know yourselves in what—in its active struggle for peace and its readiness to continue the fight against big finance capital. In this we are making no mistake, and nobody who sticks to the concept of class forces and class alignments can get away from the indisputable truth that we cannot ask a country of small peasants, a country that has given much for the European and world revolution, to carry on the struggle in a difficult situation, a most difficult situation, when help from the West-European proletariat has undoubtedly been delayed, although there is no doubt that it is coming to us, as the facts, the strikes, etc., show. That is why I say that such references to the exhaustion of the peasant masses, etc., are made by people who simply have no arguments, who are absolutely helpless when they seek such arguments, and who are quite unable to grasp class relations as a whole, in their entirety, the relations of the revolution of the proletariat and of the peasant masses; it is only when, at every sharp turn in history, we appraise the class relations as a whole, the relations of all classes, and do not select individual examples and individual cases, that we feel ourselves firmly supported by an analysis of probable facts. I realise full well that the Russian bourgeoisie are today urging us on towards a revolutionary war when it is absolutely impossible for us to have such a war. This is essential to the class interests of the bourgeoisie.

When they shout about an obscene peace and do not say a word about who brought the army to its present state, I realise quite well that it is the bourgeoisie together with the *Dyelo Naroda* people, the Tsereteli and Chernov Mensheviks and their yes-men (*applause*)—I know quite well that it is the bourgeoisie who are bawling for a revolutionary war. Their class interests demand it, their anxiety to see Soviet power make a false move demands it. It is not surprising that this comes from people who, on the one hand, fill the pages of their newspapers with counter-revolutionary scribbling. . . . (*Voices*: "They've all been suppressed!") Unfortunately, not yet all of them, but we will close them all down. (*Applause*.) I should like to see the proletariat that would allow the counter-revolutionaries, those who support the bourgeoisie and collaborate with them, to continue using the monopoly of wealth to drug the people with their bourgeois opium. There is no such proletariat. (*Applause*.)

I realise, of course, that nothing but shouts, howls and screams about an obscene peace comes from those publications, I realise full well that the people who favour this revolutionary war—from the Constitutional-Democrats to the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries—are those who meet the Germans as they advance and say triumphantly, here come the Germans, and then allow their officers, again wearing their badges of rank, to strut about in the places that have been occupied by the German imperialist invaders. Oh no, I am not a bit surprised at these bourgeois, these collaborators, preaching a revolutionary war. They want Soviet power to be caught in a trap. They have shown their hand, these bourgeois and collaborators. We have seen them and can still see live specimens, we know that in the Ukraine there are Ukrainian Kerenskys, Ukrainian Chernovs and Ukrainian Tseretelis—there they are, the Vinnichenkos. Those gentlemen, the Ukrainian Kerenskys, Chernovs and Tseretelis, concealed from the people the peace they concluded with the German imperialists, and today they are trying to overthrow Soviet power in the Ukraine with the help of German bayonets. That is what those bourgeois and those collaborators and their accomplices have done. That is what they have done, those Ukrainian bourgeois and collaborators, whose example you have before your very eyes they concealed and are still concealing their secret treaties from the people, they are attacking Soviet power with the aid of German bayonets. That is what the Russian bourgeoisie want, that is where the bourgeois yes-men are trying to push Soviet power, wittingly or unwittingly; they know that under no circumstances can Soviet power undertake an imperialist war against the might of imperialism at the present moment. That is why it is only in this international situation, in this general class situation, that we can understand the full depth

of the mistake of those who, like the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, have allowed themselves to be carried away by a theory that is common to the history of all revolutions at moments of difficulty, a theory that is half desperation and half empty phrases; according to this theory, instead of taking a sober view of reality and appraising the tasks of the revolution in respect of the internal and external enemy from the standpoint of class forces, you are asked to settle a serious and very grave problem only under the impact of your feelings, merely from the standpoint of feelings. The peace is incredibly harsh and shameful. In my statements and speeches I have had occasion to liken it to the Peace of Tilsit that the conqueror Napoleon forced on the Prussian and German peoples after a series of heavy defeats. Yes, the peace is a grave defeat and is humiliating to Soviet power, but if you, proceeding from this, and limiting yourselves to it, appeal to feelings and arouse discontent in an attempt to settle a gigantic historical problem, you will get into that ridiculous and pitiful situation into which the Socialist-Revolutionary Party once got itself, when in 1907, in a situation that was somewhat similar in certain respects, that party also appealed to the feelings of revolutionaries, when, after our revolution had suffered heavy defeats in 1906 and 1907, Stolypin presented us with the laws on the Third Duma—shameful and extremely difficult conditions of work in one of the rottenest of representative institutions—when our Party, after brief internal wavering (the wavering on the question was greater than it is today), decided the question in this way: we have no right to give way to feelings; no matter how great our indignation and dissatisfaction with the shameful Third Duma, we have to recognise that it was not chance but the historical necessity of a developing class struggle which lacked the strength to continue but which could muster that strength even in the shameful conditions that have been imposed. We proved to be right. Those who tried to attract people by revolutionary phrases, by appeals to justice (since they were expressing feelings that were trebly legitimate)—those people were given a lesson that will not be forgotten by any revolutionary capable of thought and possessing ideas.

Revolutions do not go smoothly enough to ensure rapid and easy progress. There has never been any great revolution, even on a national scale, that did not experience a hard period of defeat, and the attitude of a revolutionary towards the serious question of mass movements, of developing revolutions, must not be one of declaring the peace obscene and humiliating and then saying he cannot reconcile himself to it; it is not sufficient to quote agitational phrases, to shower reproaches on us because of the peace—that is the known ABC of the revolution, the experience of all revolutions. Our experience since 1905—and if we are rich in

anything, if there is any reason why the Russian working class and poor peasantry have taken upon themselves the most difficult and honourable task of beginning the world socialist revolution, it is because the Russian people have been able, owing to specific historical conditions, to make two great revolutions at the beginning of the twentieth century—we have to learn from the experience of those revolutions, we have to learn to understand that only by studying the changes in the class connections between one country and another is it possible to prove definitely that we are in no condition to accept battle at the moment; we have to take this into consideration and say to ourselves, whatever respite we may obtain, no matter how unstable, no matter how brief, harsh and humiliating the peace may be, it is better than war, because it gives the masses a breathing-space, because it provides us with an opportunity to correct what the bourgeoisie have done, the bourgeoisie that are shouting wherever they have an opportunity to shout, especially under the protection of the Germans in the occupied regions.

The bourgeoisie are shouting that the Bolsheviks are responsible for the disintegration of the army, that there is no army and the Bolsheviks are to blame for it; but let us look at the past, comrades, let us look, firstly, at the development of our revolution. Do you not know that desertion and the disintegration of our army began long before the revolution, in 1916, and that everybody who has seen the army will have to admit that? And what did our bourgeoisie do to prevent it? Is it not clear that the only chance for salvation from the imperialists at that time was in their hands, that a chance presented itself in March and April, when Soviet organisations could have taken power by a simple motion of the hand against the bourgeoisie. And if the Soviets had then taken power, if the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, together with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, instead of helping Kerensky deceive the people, conceal the secret treaties and lead the army to an offensive—if they had then come to the aid of the army, had supplied it with munitions and rations and had compelled the bourgeoisie to help the fatherland—not the fatherland of the hucksters, not the fatherland of treaties that help to slaughter the people (*applause*)—and had themselves participated; if the Soviets had forced the bourgeoisie to help the fatherland of the workers and all working people, and had helped the ragged, barefoot and hungry army, then, perhaps, we should have had a period of ten months, long enough to rest the army and gain unanimous support for it, so that without the army having moved one step from the front a general, democratic peace could have been proposed, the secret treaties could have been torn up and the line held without retreating a single step. There would then

have been a chance of peace, which the workers and peasants would have willingly supported and approved. That would have been the *tactics of the defence of the fatherland, not the fatherland of the Romanovs, Kerenskys, or Chernovs, a fatherland with secret treaties, a fatherland of the treacherous bourgeoisie—not that fatherland but the fatherland of the working people.* That is who is responsible for having made the transition from war to revolution and from the Russian revolution to world socialism a period of severe trials. That is why such proposals as a revolutionary war sound like empty phrases, when we know that we have no army, when we know that it would have been impossible to hold the army, and people with a knowledge of the situation could not help seeing that our decree on demobilisation was not an invention but the result of obvious necessity, because it would have been impossible to hold the army. The army could not have been held. That officer, not a Bolshevik, was right who, before the October Revolution, said that the army could not and would not fight. This is what has come of months of bargaining with the bourgeoisie and of all the speeches about the need to continue the war; no matter what noble sentiments on the part of many revolutionaries, or of few revolutionaries, may have dictated them, they proved to be empty revolutionary phrases that played into the hands of international imperialism so that it could plunder as much again and more, just as it has been doing since our tactical or diplomatic error, since the time we did not sign the Brest Treaty. When we told those who opposed concluding peace that if we had a respite of any length they would realise that the recuperation of the army and the interests of the working people were more important than anything else, and that peace should have been concluded for this reason—they maintained that there could be no respite.

But our revolution differs from all previous revolutions in having aroused among the masses a desire to build and create, and the working people in the most out-of-the-way villages, people humiliated, downtrodden and oppressed by tsars, landowners, and bourgeoisie, have been aroused; this is a period of the revolution that is only now being accomplished, now that the rural revolution is under way, the revolution that is building a new way of life. And for the sake of this respite, no matter how brief and how small it may be, it was our duty to sign the treaty, since we place the interests of the working people above the interests of the bourgeois warriors who rattle their sabres and call on us to fight. That is what the revolution teaches. The revolution teaches that when we make diplomatic mistakes, when we assume that the German workers will come to our aid tomorrow, when we hope that Liebknecht will be victorious immediately (and we know that one

way or another Liebknecht will win, that is inevitable in the development of the working-class movement (*applause*)), it means that, when used unthinkingly, the revolutionary slogans of the difficult socialist movement turn into empty phrases. There is not a single representative of the working people, there is not a single honest worker who would refuse to make the greatest sacrifice to help the socialist movement of Germany, because during all this time at the front he has learned to distinguish between the German imperialists and the soldiers tormented by German discipline, most of whom are in sympathy with us. That is why I say that the Russian revolution has corrected our mistake in practice, has corrected it by giving us the respite. It is very probable that it will be an extremely brief one, but we have the chance of at least a brief respite in which the army, worn out and hungry as it is, will become conscious of the fact that it has been given an opportunity to recuperate. It is clear to us that the period of the old imperialist wars is over and we are threatened with the further horrors of an outbreak of fresh wars, but there have been such periods of war in many historical epochs, and they have always become most fierce towards the end. This must be understood, not only at meetings in Petrograd and Moscow; it must be understood by the many tens of millions in the countryside; and the more enlightened part of the rural population, those returning from the front, those who have experienced the horrors of war, must help them understand it; the huge masses of peasants and workers must become convinced of the necessity for a revolutionary front—they will then say we have acted correctly.

They tell us we have betrayed the Ukraine and Finland—what disgrace! But the situation that has arisen is such that we are cut off from Finland, with whom we concluded an unwritten treaty before the revolution and have now concluded a formal treaty.<sup>269</sup> They say we are surrendering the Ukraine, which Chernov, Kerensky and Tsereteli are going to ruin; they say we are traitors, we have betrayed the Ukraine! I say: Comrades, I've seen enough of the history of revolution not to be embarrassed by the hostile glances and shouts of people who give way to their feelings and are incapable of clear judgement. I will give you a simple example. Suppose that two friends are out walking at night and they are attacked by ten men. If the scoundrels isolate one of them, what is the other to do? He cannot render assistance, and if he runs away is he a traitor?<sup>270</sup> And suppose that it is not a matter of individuals or of spheres in which questions of direct feelings are being settled, but of five armies, each a hundred-thousand strong, that surround an army of two hundred thousand, and that there

<sup>270</sup> See also p. 548 of the present volume.—Ed.

is another army that should come to the embattled army's assistance. But if that second army knows that it is certain to fall into a trap, it should withdraw; it must withdraw, even if the retreat has to be covered by the conclusion of an obscene, foul peace—curse as much as you like, but it is necessary to conclude the peace. There is no reason for considering the feelings of a duelist who draws his sword and says that he must die because he is being compelled to conclude a humiliating peace. But we all know that, however we may decide, we have no army, and no gestures will save us from the necessity of withdrawing to gain time and enable our army to recuperate; everybody who looks reality in the face and does not deceive himself with revolutionary phrase-making will agree with this. Anyone who faces the facts without blinding himself with phrase-making and arrogance must know this.

If we know this, it is our revolutionary duty to conclude even this harsh, super-harsh and rapacious treaty, for by so doing we shall reach a better position for ourselves and for our allies. Did we actually lose anything by concluding the peace treaty of March 3? Anyone who wants to look at things from the point of view of mass relations, and not from that of the aristocratic duelist, will realise that without an army, or having only the sick remnant of an army, it would be self-deception, it would be the greatest deception of the people, to accept battle and call it a revolutionary war. It is our duty to tell the people the truth; yes, the peace is a harsh one. The Ukraine and Finland are perishing but we must accept this peace and all class-conscious working people in Russia will accept it because they know the unvarnished truth, they know the meaning of war, they know that to stake everything on one card on the assumption that the German revolution will begin immediately is self-deception. By concluding peace we have obtained what we gave our Finnish friends—a respite, help and not destruction.

I know of examples from history of much more rapacious peace treaties having been concluded, treaties that surrendered viable nations to the mercy of the conqueror. Let us compare our peace to the Peace of Tilsit; the Peace of Tilsit was enforced on Prussia and Germany by a conqueror. That peace was so harsh that not only were all the capital cities of all the German states seized, not only were the Prussians thrown back to Tilsit, which would be the same as throwing us back to Omsk or Tomsk; not only that—the worst of all was that Napoleon compelled the conquered peoples to supply him with auxiliary troops for his wars; but nevertheless, when the situation became such that the German peoples had to withstand the attacks of the conqueror, when the epoch of revolutionary wars in France gave place to the epoch of imperialist wars of conquest, then came the revelation which those people who wax



enthusiastic over empty phrases do not want to understand, those people, that is, who picture the conclusion of peace as a downfall. This psychology is understandable in an aristocratic duelist but not in a worker or peasant. The latter has been through the hard school of war and has learned to calculate. There have been even greater trials, and nations even more backward have come through them. Harsher peace treaties have been concluded, the Germans concluded one in an epoch when they had no army, or when their army was sick like ours. They concluded a very harsh peace with Napoleon. But that peace was not the downfall of Germany—on the contrary, it was the turning-point, national defence, renewal. We are on the eve of just such a turning-point and are experiencing analogous conditions. We must look truth in the face and banish all empty phrases and declarations. We must say, peace, if it is necessary, must be concluded. The war of liberation, the class war, the war of the people will take the place of the Napoleonic wars. The system of the Napoleonic wars will change, war will give place to peace and peace to war, and from every harsh peace there has always emerged a more extensive preparation for war. The harshest of peace treaties—the Peace of Tilsit—has gone down in history as a turning-point towards the time when the German people began to swing round; when they retreated to Tilsit, to Russia, they were actually gaining time, waiting for the international situation that had, at one time, favoured Napoleon—he was another plunderer like Hohenzollern or Hindenburg—waiting until the situation changed, until the mentality of the German people, tormented by decades of Napoleonic wars and defeats, had recuperated and the German people were resuscitated. That is what history teaches us, that is why all despair and empty phrases are criminal, that is why everyone will say yes, the old imperialist wars are ending—an historical turning-point has come.

Our revolution has been one long triumph since October, and now the lengthy times of hardship have come, we do not know for how long, but we do know that it will be a long and difficult period of defeats and retreats, because the alignment of forces is what it is, because by retreating we shall give the people a chance to recuperate. We shall make it possible for every worker and peasant to realise the truth that will enable him to understand that new wars waged by the imperialist plunderers against the oppressed peoples are beginning, and every worker and peasant will realise that we must rise in defence of the fatherland, because we have been defencists since October. Since October 25 we have said openly that we stand for the defence of the fatherland, because we have a fatherland, the one from which we have driven the Kerenskys and Chernovs, because we have torn up

the secret treaties, because we have crushed the bourgeoisie—badly so far, but we shall learn to do it better.

Comrades, there is another important difference between the condition of the German people and of the Russian people who have suffered a severe defeat at the hands of the German invaders—there is a tremendous difference that must be mentioned, although I have already touched upon it briefly in the preceding part of my speech. Comrades, when the German people, over a hundred years ago, entered a period of the most cruel wars of conquest, a period when they had to retreat and conclude one shameful treaty after another before they were awakened—at that time the German people were weak and backward, just that and nothing more. They had against them not only the military forces and the might of the conqueror Napoleon, they had against them a country that was far above Germany in the revolutionary and political sense and in every other respect, a country that had risen far above all others, a country that had reached the top. That country was far above the people who were languishing in subjection to the imperialists and landowners. A people that, I repeat, had been nothing but a weak and backward people, managed to learn from its bitter lessons and to raise itself up. We are in a better position; we are not merely a weak and backward people, we are the people who have been able—not because of any special services or of historical predestination, but because of a definite conjunction of historical circumstances—who have been able to accept the honour of raising the banner of the international socialist revolution. (*Applause.*)

I am well aware, comrades, that the banner is in weak hands, I have said that outright several times already, and the workers of the most backward country will not be able to hold that banner unless the workers of all advanced countries come to their aid. The socialist reforms that we have accomplished are far from perfect, they are weak and insufficient; they will serve as a guide to the advanced West-European workers who will say to themselves, "The Russians haven't made a very good beginning on the job that has to be done"; the important thing is that our people are not merely a weak and backward people as compared with the Germans, they are the people who have raised the banner of revolution. Although the bourgeoisie of any country you like are filling the columns of their press with slander of the Bolsheviks, although the voice of the imperialist press in France, Britain, Germany, etc., curses the Bolsheviks in unison, you will not find a meeting of workers in any country at which the names and slogans of our socialist government give rise to bursts of indignation. (*Voices: "That's a lie!"*) No, it is not, it is the truth, and anyone who has been in Germany, Austria, Switzerland or America during the past

few months will tell you it is the truth and not a lie, that the names and slogans of representatives of Soviet power in Russia are greeted with the greatest enthusiasm by the workers and that, despite all the lies of the bourgeoisie of Germany, France, etc., the working-class masses have realised that no matter how weak we may be, their cause is being served here in Russia. Yes, our people have a very heavy burden to bear, the burden they have themselves taken up; but a people that has been able to establish Soviet power cannot perish. Again I repeat—there is not a single politically conscious socialist, not a single worker among those who think over the history of the revolution, who can dispute the fact that Soviet power—despite all the defects that I know only too well and fully appreciate—is the highest type of state, the direct successor to the Paris Commune. It has ascended a step higher than the other European revolutions so that we are not experiencing the difficult conditions that the German people experienced a hundred years ago; the change in the balance of forces among the plunderers, taking advantage of the conflict and satisfying the demands of plunderer Napoleon, plunderer Alexander I and the plundering British monarchy—that was the only thing left, the one chance, for the German people, oppressed by feudalism; and yet the German people did not perish from the Peace of Tilsit. But we, I say again, have better conditions, we have a powerful ally in all West-European countries, the international socialist proletariat, the proletariat that is on our side no matter what our enemies may say. (*Applause.*) True, it is not easy for that ally to raise his voice, any more than it was easy for us until the end of February 1917. That ally is living in the underground, under conditions of the military prison into which all imperialist countries have been turned, but he knows us and understands our cause; it is difficult for him to come to our aid, and Soviet troops, therefore, will need much time and patience and will have to go through many trials before the time comes when he will aid us—we shall use even the slightest chance of procrastination, for time is working on our side. Our cause is gaining strength, the forces of the imperialists are weakening, and no matter what trials and defeats may emerge from the “Tilsit” peace, we are beginning the tactics of withdrawal and, once more I say it, there is no doubt the politically-conscious proletariat and, likewise, the politically-conscious peasants are on our side, and we shall be able not only to make heroic attacks, but also to make a heroic retreat and we shall wait until the international socialist proletariat comes to our aid and shall then begin a second socialist revolution that will be world-wide in its scope. (*Applause.*)

## 2

**RESOLUTION ON RATIFICATION  
OF THE BREST TREATY**

The Congress confirms (ratifies) the peace treaty signed by our representatives at Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918.

The Congress recognises as correct the actions of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars in deciding to conclude the present incredibly harsh, rapacious and humiliating peace in view of our having no army and of the extreme war weariness of the people, who in their distress have received no support from the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intelligentsia, but have seen that distress made use of for selfish class purposes.

The Congress also recognises the undoubted correctness of the actions of the peace delegation that refused to enter into a detailed discussion on the German peace terms, because those terms were imposed on us in the form of an obvious ultimatum and by undisguised force.

The Congress most insistently urges upon all workers, soldiers and peasants, all the working and oppressed masses, the main, immediate and most urgent task of the moment—the improvement of the discipline and self-discipline of the working people; the creation throughout the country of strong, well-founded organisations that cover, as far as possible, all production and distribution; a ruthless struggle against the chaos, disorganisation and economic ruin which are historically inevitable as the legacy of a most agonising war, but which are, at the same time, the main obstacle to the complete victory of socialism and the strengthening of the foundations of socialist society.

Today, after the October Revolution, after the overthrow of the political power of the bourgeoisie in Russia, after our denunciation and publication of all secret imperialist treaties, after the cancellation of the foreign loans, after the workers' and peasants' government has proposed a just peace to all peoples without exception, Russia, having escaped from the clutches of the imperialist war, has the right to announce that she is not a participant in the plunder and suppression of other countries.

The Russian Soviet Federative Republic, having unanimously condemned predatory wars, from now on deems it its right and its duty to defend the socialist fatherland against all possible attacks by any of the imperialist powers.

The Congress therefore deems it the unconditional duty of all working people to muster all forces to re-establish and improve the defence potential of our country, to re-establish its military

strength on the basis of a socialist militia and the universal military training of all adolescents and adults of both sexes.

The Congress expresses its absolute confidence that Soviet power, which has valiantly fulfilled all the obligations of the international solidarity of the workers of all countries in their struggle for socialism against the yoke of capital, will in future do everything possible to promote the international socialist movement, to secure and shorten the road leading mankind to deliverance from the yoke of capital and from wage slavery, to the creation of a socialist society and to an enduring, just peace between the peoples.

The Congress is firmly convinced that the international workers' revolution is not far away, that the full victory of the socialist proletariat is assured despite the fact that the imperialists of all countries do not hesitate to use the most brutal means for the suppression of the socialist movement.

The resolution was written  
on March 13 or 14, 1918,  
the "Report on Ratification of  
the Peace Treaty" was published  
in *Pravda (Sotsial Demokrat)*  
No 47 and 48 March 16 and 17  
(3 and 4), 1918 and the resolution  
in *Pravda (Sotsial-Demokrat)* No 47,  
March 13 (3), 1918

*Collected Works*, Vol 27,  
pp 172-90 and 200-01

---

## THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT<sup>270</sup>

### THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF THE RUSSIAN SOVIET REPUBLIC AND THE FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

Thanks to the peace which has been achieved—despite its extremely onerous character and extreme instability—the Russian Soviet Republic has gained an opportunity to concentrate its efforts for a while on the most important and most difficult aspect of the socialist revolution, namely, the task of organisation.

This task was clearly and definitely set before all the working and oppressed people in the fourth paragraph (Part 4) of the resolution adopted at the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets in Moscow on March 15, 1918, in that paragraph (or part) which speaks of the self-discipline of the working people and of the ruthless struggle against chaos and disorganisation.\*

Of course, the peace achieved by the Russian Soviet Republic is unstable not because she is now thinking of resuming military operations; apart from bourgeois counter-revolutionaries and their henchmen (the Mensheviks and others), no sane politician thinks of doing that. The instability of the peace is due to the fact that in the imperialist states bordering on Russia to the West and the East, which command enormous military forces, the military party, tempted by Russia's momentary weakness and egged on by capitalists, who hate socialism and are eager for plunder, may gain the upper hand at any moment.

Under these circumstances the only real, not paper, guarantee of peace we have is the antagonism among the imperialist powers, which has reached extreme limits, and which is apparent on the one hand in the resumption of the imperialist butchery of the peoples in the West, and on the other hand in the extreme intensification of imperialist rivalry between Japan and America for supremacy in the Pacific and on the Pacific coast.

It goes without saying that with such an unreliable guard for protection, our Soviet Socialist Republic is in an extremely unstable and certainly critical international position. All our efforts must be



exerted to the very utmost to make use of the respite given us by the combination of circumstances so that we can heal the very severe wounds inflicted by the war upon the entire social organism of Russia and bring about an economic revival, without which a real increase in our country's defence potential is inconceivable.

It also goes without saying that we shall be able to render effective assistance to the socialist revolution in the West, which has been delayed for a number of reasons, only to the extent that we are able to fulfil the task of organisation confronting us.

A fundamental condition for the successful accomplishment of the primary task of organisation confronting us is that the people's political leaders, i.e., the members of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and following them all the class-conscious representatives of the mass of the working people, shall fully appreciate the radical distinction in this respect between previous bourgeois revolutions and the present socialist revolution.

In bourgeois revolutions, the principal task of the mass of working people was to fulfil the negative or destructive work of abolishing feudalism, monarchy and medievalism. The positive or constructive work of organising the new society was carried out by the property-owning bourgeois minority of the population. And the latter carried out this task with relative ease, despite the resistance of the workers and the poor peasants, not only because the resistance of the people exploited by capital was then extremely weak, since they were scattered and uneducated, but also because the chief organising force of anarchically built capitalist society is the spontaneously growing and expanding national and international market.

In every socialist revolution, however—and consequently in the socialist revolution in Russia which we began on October 25, 1917—the principal task of the proletariat, and of the poor peasants which it leads, is the positive or constructive work of setting up an extremely intricate and delicate system of new organisational relationships extending to the planned production and distribution of the goods required for the existence of tens of millions of people. Such a revolution can be successfully carried out only if the majority of the population, and primarily the majority of the working people, engage in independent creative work as makers of history. Only if the proletariat and the poor peasants display sufficient class-consciousness, devotion to principle, self-sacrifice and perseverance, will the victory of the socialist revolution be assured. By creating a new, Soviet type of state, which gives the working and oppressed people the chance to take an active part in the independent building up of a new society, we solved only a small part of this difficult problem. The principal difficulty lies in the economic sphere, namely, the introduction of the strictest and



universal accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, raising the productivity of labour and *socialising* production *in practice*.

---

The development of the Bolshevik Party, which today is the governing party in Russia, very strikingly indicates the nature of the turning-point in history we have now reached, which is the peculiar feature of the present political situation, and which calls for a new orientation of Soviet power, i.e., for a new presentation of new tasks.

The first task of every party of the future is to convince the majority of the people that its programme and tactics are correct. This task stood in the forefront both in tsarist times and in the period of the Chernovs' and Tseretelis' policy of compromise with the Kerenskys and Kishkins. This task has now been fulfilled in the main, for, as the recent Congress of Soviets in Moscow incontrovertibly proved, the majority of the workers and peasants of Russia are obviously on the side of the Bolsheviks; but of course, it is far from being completely fulfilled (and it can never be completely fulfilled).

The second task that confronted our Party was to capture political power and to suppress the resistance of the exploiters. This task has not been completely fulfilled either, and it cannot be ignored because the monarchists and Constitutional-Democrats, on the one hand, and their henchmen and hangers-on, the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, on the other, are continuing their efforts to unite for the purpose of overthrowing Soviet power. In the main, however, the task of suppressing the resistance of the exploiters was fulfilled in the period from October 25, 1917, to (approximately) February 1918, or to the surrender of Bogayevsky.

A third task is now coming to the fore as the immediate task and one which constitutes the peculiar feature of the present situation, namely, the task of organising *administration* of Russia. Of course, we advanced and tackled this task on the very day following October 25, 1917. Up to now, however, since the resistance of the exploiters still took the form of open civil war, up to now the task of administration *could not* become the *main*, the *central* task.

Now it has become the main and central task. We, the Bolshevik Party, have *convinced* Russia. We have *won* Russia from the rich for the poor, from the exploiters for the working people. Now we must *administer* Russia. And the whole peculiarity of the present situation, the whole difficulty, lies in understanding *the specific features of the transition* from the principal task of convincing the

people and of suppressing the exploiters by armed force to the principal task of *administration*.

For the first time in human history a socialist party has managed to complete in the main the conquest of power and the suppression of the exploiters, and has managed to *approach directly* the task of *administration*. We must prove worthy executors of this most difficult (and most gratifying) task of the socialist revolution. We must *fully realise* that in order to administer successfully, *besides* being able to convince people, besides being able to win a civil war, we must be able to do *practical organisational work*. This is the most difficult task, because it is a matter of organising in a new way the most deep-rooted, the economic, foundations of life of scores of millions of people. And it is the most gratifying task, because only *after* it has been fulfilled (in the principal and main outlines) will it be possible to say that Russia *has become* not only a Soviet, but also a socialist, republic.

## THE GENERAL SLOGAN OF THE MOMENT

The objective situation reviewed above, which has been created by the extremely onerous and unstable peace, the terrible state of ruin, the unemployment and famine we inherited from the war and the rule of the bourgeoisie (represented by Kerensky and the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries who supported him), all this has inevitably caused extreme weariness and even exhaustion of wide sections of the working people. These people insistently demand—and cannot but demand—a respite. The task of the day is to restore the productive forces destroyed by the war and by bourgeois rule; to heal the wounds inflicted by the war, by the defeat in the war, by profiteering and the attempts of the bourgeoisie to restore the overthrown rule of the exploiters; to achieve economic revival; to provide reliable protection of elementary order. It may sound paradoxical, but in fact, considering the objective conditions indicated above, it is absolutely certain that at the present moment the Soviet system can secure Russia's transition to socialism only if these very elementary, extremely elementary problems of maintaining public life are practically solved in spite of the resistance of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries. In view of the specific features of the present situation, and in view of the existence of Soviet power with its land socialisation law, workers' control law, etc., the practical solution of these extremely elementary problems and the overcoming of the organisational difficulties of the first stages of progress toward socialism are now two aspects of the same picture.

Keep regular and honest accounts of money, manage economi-

cally, do not be lazy, do not steal, observe the strictest labour discipline—it is these slogans, justly scorned by the revolutionary proletariat when the bourgeoisie used them to conceal its rule as an exploiting class, that are now, since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, becoming the immediate and the principal slogans of the moment. On the one hand, the practical application of these slogans by *the mass* of working people is the *sole* condition for the salvation of a country which has been tortured almost to death by the imperialist war and by the imperialist robbers (headed by Kerensky); on the other hand, the practical application of these slogans by the *Soviet* state, by *its* methods, on the basis of *its* laws, is a necessary and *sufficient* condition for the final victory of socialism. This is precisely what those who contemptuously brush aside the idea of putting such “hackneyed” and “trivial” slogans in the forefront fail to understand. In a small-peasant country, which overthrew tsarism only a year ago, and which liberated itself from the Kerenskys less than six months ago, there has naturally remained not a little of spontaneous anarchy, intensified by the brutality and savagery that accompany every protracted and reactionary war, and there has arisen a good deal of despair and aimless bitterness. And if we add to this the provocative policy of the lackeys of the bourgeoisie (the Mensheviks, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc.) it will become perfectly clear what prolonged and persistent efforts must be exerted by the best and the most class-conscious workers and peasants in order to bring about a complete change in the mood of the people and to bring them on to the proper path of steady and disciplined labour. Only such a transition brought about by the mass of the poor (the proletarians and semi-proletarians) can consummate the victory over the bourgeoisie and particularly over the peasant bourgeoisie, more stubborn and numerous.

### THE NEW PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE BOURGEOISIE

The bourgeoisie in our country has been conquered, but it has not yet been uprooted, not yet destroyed, and not even utterly broken. That is why we are faced with a new and higher form of struggle against the bourgeoisie, the transition from the very simple task of further expropriation, the capitalists to the much more complicated and difficult task of creating conditions in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, or for a new bourgeoisie to arise. Clearly, this task is immeasurably more significant than the previous one; and until it is fulfilled there will be no socialism.

If we measure our revolution by the scale of West-European

revolutions we shall find that at the present moment we are approximately at the level reached in 1793 and 1871. We can be legitimately proud of having risen to this level, and of having certainly, in one respect, advanced somewhat further, namely: we have decreed and introduced throughout Russia the highest *type* of state—Soviet power. Under no circumstances, however, can we rest content with what we have achieved, because we have only just started the transition to socialism, we have *not yet* done the decisive thing in *this* respect.

The decisive thing is the organisation of the strictest and country-wide accounting and control of production and distribution of goods. And yet, we have *not yet* introduced accounting and control in those enterprises and in those branches and fields of economy which we have taken away from the bourgeoisie; and without this there can be no thought of achieving the second and equally essential material condition for introducing socialism, namely, raising the productivity of labour on a national scale.

That is why the present task could not be defined by the simple formula: continue the offensive against capital. Although we have certainly not finished off capital and although it is certainly necessary to continue the offensive against this enemy of the working people, such a formula would be inexact, would not be concrete, would not take into account the *peculiarity* of the present situation in which, in order to go on advancing successfully *in the future*, we must “suspend” our offensive *now*.

This can be explained by comparing our position in the war against capital with the position of a victorious army that has captured, say, a half or two-thirds of the enemy's territory and is compelled to halt in order to muster its forces, to replenish its supplies of munitions, repair and reinforce the lines of communication, build new storehouses, bring up new reserves, etc. To suspend the offensive of a victorious army under such conditions is necessary precisely in order to gain the rest of the enemy's territory, i.e., in order to achieve complete victory. Those who have failed to understand that the objective state of affairs at the present moment dictates to us precisely such a “suspension” of the offensive against capital have failed to understand anything at all about the present political situation.

It goes without saying that we can speak about the “suspension” of the offensive against capital only in quotation marks, i.e., only metaphorically. In ordinary war, a general order can be issued to stop the offensive, the advance can actually be stopped. In the war against capital, however, the advance cannot be stopped, and there can be no thought of our abandoning the further expropriation of capital. What we are discussing is the shifting of the *centre of gravity* of our economic and political work. Up to now measures

for the direct expropriation of the expropriators were *in the forefront*. Now the organisation of accounting and control in those enterprises in which the capitalists have already been expropriated, and in all other enterprises, advances *to the forefront*.

If we decided to continue to expropriate capital at the same rate at which we have been doing it up to now, we should certainly suffer defeat, because our work of organising proletarian accounting and control has obviously—obviously to every thinking person—*fallen behind* the work of *directly* “expropriating the expropriators”. If we now concentrate all our efforts on the organisation of accounting and control, we shall be able to solve this problem, we shall be able to make up for lost time, we shall *completely* win our “campaign” against capital.

But is not the admission that we must make up for lost time tantamount to admission of some kind of an error? Not in the least. Take another military example. If it is possible to defeat and push back the enemy merely with detachments of light cavalry, it should be done. But if this can be done successfully only up to a certain point, then it is quite conceivable that when this point has been reached, it will be necessary to bring up heavy artillery. By admitting that it is now necessary to make up for lost time in bringing up heavy artillery, we do not admit that the successful cavalry attack was a mistake.

Frequently, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie reproached us for having launched a “Red Guard” attack on capital. The reproach is absurd and is worthy only of the lackeys of the money-bags, because *at one time* the “Red Guard” attack on capital was absolutely dictated by circumstances. Firstly, *at that time* capital put up military resistance through the medium of Kerensky and Krasnov, Savinkov and Go<sup>+</sup> (Gegechkori is putting up such resistance even now), Dutov and Bogayevsky. Military resistance cannot be broken except by military means, and the Red Guards fought in the noble and supreme historical cause of liberating the working and exploited people from the yoke of the exploiters.

Secondly, we could not at that time put methods of administration in the forefront in place of methods of suppression, because the art of administration is not innate, but is acquired by experience. At that time we lacked this experience; now we have it. Thirdly, at that time we could not have specialists in the various fields of knowledge and technology at our disposal because those specialists were either fighting in the ranks of the Bogayevskys, or were still able to put up systematic and stubborn passive resistance by way of *sabotage*. Now we have broken the sabotage. The “Red Guard” attack on capital was successful, was victorious, because we broke capital’s military resistance and its resistance by sabotage.

Does that mean that a "Red Guard" attack on capital is *always* appropriate, under *all* circumstances, that we have *no* other means of fighting capital? It would be childish to think so. We achieved victory with the aid of light cavalry, but we also have heavy artillery. We achieved victory by methods of suppression; we shall be able to achieve victory also by methods of administration. We must know how to change our methods of fighting the enemy to suit changes in the situation. We shall not for a moment renounce "Red Guard" suppression of the Savinkovs and Gegechkoris and all other landowner and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. We shall not be so foolish, however, as to put "Red Guard" methods in the forefront at a time when the period in which Red Guard attacks were necessary has, in the main, drawn to a close (and to a victorious close), and when the period of utilising bourgeois specialists by the proletarian state power for the purpose of re-ploughing the soil in order to prevent the growth of any bourgeois whatever is knocking at the door.

This is a peculiar epoch, or rather stage of development, and in order to defeat capital completely, we must be able to adapt the forms of our struggle to the peculiar conditions of this stage.

Without the guidance of experts in the various fields of knowledge, technology and experience, the transition to socialism will be impossible, because socialism calls for a conscious mass advance to greater productivity of labour compared with capitalism, and on the basis achieved by capitalism. Socialism must achieve this advance *in its own way*, by its own methods—or, to put it more concretely, by *Soviet* methods. And the specialists, because of the whole social environment which made them specialists, are, in the main, inevitably bourgeois. Had our proletariat, after capturing power, quickly solved the problem of accounting, control and organisation on a national scale (which was impossible owing to the war and Russia's backwardness), then we, after breaking the sabotage, would also have completely subordinated these bourgeois experts to ourselves by means of universal accounting and control. Owing to the considerable "delay" in introducing accounting and control generally, we, although we have managed to conquer sabotage, have *not yet* created the conditions which would place the bourgeois specialists at our disposal. The mass of saboteurs are "going to work", but the best organisers and the top experts can be utilised by the state either in the old way, in the bourgeois way (i.e., for high salaries), or in the new way, in the proletarian way (i.e., creating the conditions of national accounting and control from below, which would inevitably and of themselves subordinate the experts and enlist them for our work).

Now we have to resort to the old bourgeois method and to agree to pay a very high price for the "services" of the top bourgeois

experts. All those who are familiar with the subject appreciate this, but not all ponder over the significance of this measure being adopted by the proletarian state. Clearly, this measure is a compromise, a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune and of every proletarian power, which call for the reduction of all salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker, which urge that careerism be fought not merely in words, but in deeds.

Moreover, it is clear that this measure not only implies the cessation—in a certain field and to a certain degree—of the offensive against capital (for capital is not a sum of money, but a definite social relation); it is also *a step backward* on the part of our socialist Soviet state power, which from the very outset proclaimed and pursued the policy of reducing high salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker.<sup>271</sup>

Of course, the lackeys of the bourgeoisie, particularly the small fry, such as the Mensheviks, the *Novaya Zhizn* people and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, will giggle over our confession that we are taking a step backward. But we need not mind their giggling. We must study the specific features of the extremely difficult and new path to socialism without concealing our mistakes and weaknesses, and try to be prompt in doing what has been left undone. To conceal from the people the fact that the enlistment of bourgeois experts by means of extremely high salaries is a retreat from the principles of the Paris Commune would be sinking to the level of bourgeois politicians and deceiving the people. Frankly explaining how and why we took this step backward, and then publicly discussing what means are available for making up for lost time, means educating the people and learning from experience, learning together with the people how to build socialism. There is hardly a single victorious military campaign in history in which the victor did not commit certain mistakes, suffer partial reverses, temporarily yield something and in some places retreat. The "campaign" which we have undertaken against capitalism is a million times more difficult than the most difficult military campaign, and it would be silly and disgraceful to give way to despondency because of a particular and partial retreat.

We shall now discuss the question from the practical point of view. Let us assume that the Russian Soviet Republic requires one thousand first-class scientists and experts in various fields of knowledge, technology and practical experience to direct the labour of the people towards securing the speediest possible economic revival. Let us assume also that we shall have to pay these "stars of the first magnitude"—of course the majority of those who shout loudest about the corruption of the workers are themselves utterly corrupted by bourgeois morals—25,000 rubles per annum each. Let us assume that this sum (25,000,000 rubles) will have to be doubled

(assuming that we have to pay bonuses for particularly successful and rapid fulfilment of the most important organisational and technical tasks), or even quadrupled (assuming that we have to enlist several hundred foreign specialists, who are more demanding). The question is, would the annual expenditure of fifty or a hundred million rubles by the Soviet Republic for the purpose of reorganising the labour of the people on modern scientific and technological lines be excessive or too heavy? Of course not. The overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers and peasants will approve of this expenditure because they know from practical experience that our backwardness causes us to lose thousands of millions, and that we have *not yet* reached that degree of organisation, accounting and control which would induce all the "stars" of the bourgeois intelligentsia to participate voluntarily in *our* work.

It goes without saying that this question has another side to it. The corrupting influence of high salaries—both upon the Soviet authorities (especially since the revolution occurred so rapidly that it was impossible to prevent a certain number of adventurers and rogues from getting into positions of authority, and they, together with a number of inept or dishonest commissars, would not be averse to becoming "star" embezzlers of state funds) and upon the mass of the workers—is indisputable. Every thinking and honest worker and poor peasant, however, will agree with us, will admit, that we cannot immediately rid ourselves of the evil legacy of capitalism, and that we can liberate the Soviet Republic from the duty of paying an annual "tribute" of fifty million or one hundred million rubles (a tribute for our own backwardness in organising *country-wide* accounting and control *from below*) only by organising ourselves, by tightening up discipline in our own ranks, by purging our ranks of all those who are "preserving the legacy of capitalism", who "follow the traditions of capitalism", i.e., of idlers, parasites and embezzlers of state funds (now all the land, all the factories and all the railways are the "state funds" of the Soviet Republic). If the class-conscious advanced workers and poor peasants manage with the aid of the Soviet institutions to organise, become disciplined, pull themselves together, create powerful labour discipline in the course of one year, then in a year's time we shall throw off this "tribute", which can be reduced even before that ... in exact proportion to the successes we achieve in our workers' and peasants' labour discipline and organisation. The sooner we ourselves, workers and peasants, learn the best labour discipline and the most modern technique of labour, using the bourgeois experts to teach us, the sooner we shall liberate ourselves from any "tribute" to these specialists.

Our work of organising country-wide accounting and control of production and distribution under the supervision of the pro-



letariat has lagged very much behind our work of directly expropriating the expropriators. This proposition is of fundamental importance for understanding the specific features of the present situation and the tasks of the Soviet government that follow from it. The centre of gravity of our struggle against the bourgeoisie is shifting to the organisation of such accounting and control. Only with this as our starting-point will it be possible to determine correctly the immediate tasks of economic and financial policy in the sphere of nationalisation of the banks, monopolisation of foreign trade, the state control of money circulation, the introduction of a property and income tax satisfactory from the proletarian point of view, and the introduction of compulsory labour service.

We have been lagging very far behind in introducing socialist reforms in these spheres (very, very important spheres), and this is because accounting and control are insufficiently organised in general. It goes without saying that this is one of the most difficult tasks, and in view of the ruin caused by the war, it can be fulfilled only over a long period of time; but we must not forget that it is precisely here that the bourgeoisie—and particularly the numerous petty and peasant bourgeoisie—are putting up the most serious fight, disrupting the control that is already being organised, disrupting the grain monopoly, for example, and gaining positions for profiteering and speculative trade. We have far from adequately carried out the things we have decreed, and the principal task of the moment is to concentrate all efforts on the businesslike, practical *realisation* of the principles of the reforms which have already become law (but not yet reality).

In order to proceed with the nationalisation of the banks and to go on steadfastly towards transforming the banks into nodal points of public accounting under socialism, we must first of all, and above all, achieve real success in increasing the number of branches of the People's Bank, in attracting deposits, in simplifying the paying in and withdrawal of deposits by the public, in abolishing queues, in catching and *shooti.g* bribe-takers and rogues, etc. At first we must really carry out the simplest things, properly organise what is available, and then prepare for the more intricate things.

Consolidate and improve the state monopolies (in grain, leather, etc.) which have already been introduced, and by doing so prepare for the state monopoly of foreign trade. Without this monopoly we shall not be able to "free ourselves" from foreign capital by paying "tribute". And the possibility of building up socialism depends entirely upon whether we shall be able, by paying a certain tribute to foreign capital during a certain transitional period, to safeguard our internal economic independence.

We are also lagging very far behind in regard to the collection

of taxes generally, and of the property and income tax in particular. The imposing of indemnities upon the bourgeoisie—a measure which in principle is absolutely permissible and deserves proletarian approval—shows that in this respect we are still nearer to the methods of warfare (to win Russia from the rich for the poor) than to the methods of administration. In order to become stronger, however, and in order to be able to stand firmer on our feet, we must adopt the latter methods, we must substitute for the indemnities imposed upon the bourgeoisie the constant and regular collection of a property and income tax, which will bring a *greater* return to the proletarian state, and which calls for better organisation on our part and better accounting and control.

The fact that we are late in introducing compulsory labour service also shows that the work that is coming to the fore at the present time is precisely the preparatory organisational work that, on the one hand, will finally consolidate our gains and that, on the other, is necessary in order to prepare for the operation of “surrounding” capital and compelling it to “surrender”. We ought to begin introducing compulsory labour service immediately, but we must do so very gradually and circumspectly, testing every step by practical experience, and, of course, taking the first step by introducing compulsory labour service *for the rich*. The introduction of work and consumers’ budget books for every bourgeois, including every rural bourgeois, would be an important step towards completely “surrounding” the enemy and towards the creation of a truly popular accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE FOR COUNTRY-WIDE ACCOUNTING AND CONTROL**

The state, which for centuries has been an organ for oppression and robbery of the people, has left us a legacy of the people’s supreme hatred and suspicion of everything that is connected with the state. It is very difficult to overcome this, and only a Soviet government can do it. Even a Soviet government, however, will require plenty of time and enormous perseverance to accomplish it. This “legacy” is especially apparent in the problem of accounting and control—the fundamental problem facing the socialist revolution on the morrow of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. A certain amount of time will inevitably pass before the people, who feel free for the first time now that the landowners and the bourgeoisie have been overthrown, will understand—not from books, but from their own, *Soviet* experience—will understand and *feel* that without comprehensive state

accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, the power of the working people, the freedom of the working people, *cannot* be maintained, and that a return to the yoke of capitalism is *inevitable*.

All the habits and traditions of the bourgeoisie, and of the petty bourgeoisie in particular, also oppose *state* control, and uphold the inviolability of "sacred private property", of "sacred" private enterprise. It is now particularly clear to us how correct is the Marxist thesis that anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism are *bourgeois* trends, how irreconcilably opposed they are to socialism, proletarian dictatorship and communism. The fight to instil into the people's minds the idea of *Soviet* state control and accounting, and to carry out this idea in practice; the fight to break with the rotten past, which taught the people to regard the procurement of bread and clothes as a "private" affair, and buying and selling as a transaction "which concerns only myself"—is a great fight of world-historic significance, a fight between socialist consciousness and bourgeois-anarchist spontaneity.

We have introduced workers' control as a law, but this law is only just beginning to operate and is only just beginning to penetrate the minds of broad sections of the proletariat. In our agitation we do not sufficiently explain that lack of accounting and control in the production and distribution of goods means the death of the rudiments of socialism, means the embezzlement of state funds (for all property belongs to the state and the state is the Soviet state in which power belongs to the majority of the working people). We do not sufficiently explain that carelessness in accounting and control is downright aiding and abetting the German and the Russian Kornilovs, who can overthrow the power of the working people *only* if we fail to cope with the task of accounting and control, and who, with the aid of the whole of the rural bourgeoisie, with the aid of the Constitutional-Democrats, the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, are "watching" us and waiting for an opportune moment to attack us. And the advanced workers and peasants do not think and speak about this sufficiently. Until workers' control has become a fact, until the advanced workers have organised and carried out a victorious and ruthless crusade against the violators of this control, or against those who are careless in matters of control, it will be impossible to pass from the first step (from workers' control) to the second step towards socialism, i.e., to pass on to workers' regulation of production.

The socialist state can arise only as a network of producers' and consumers' communes, which conscientiously keep account of their production and consumption, economise on labour, and steadily raise the productivity of labour, thus making it possible

to reduce the working day to seven, six and even fewer hours. Nothing will be achieved unless the strictest, country-wide, comprehensive accounting and control of *grain* and the *production of grain* (and later of all other essential goods) are set going. Capitalism left us a legacy of mass organisations which can facilitate our transition to the mass accounting and control of the distribution of goods, namely, the consumers' co-operative societies. In Russia these societies are not so well developed as in the advanced countries, nevertheless, they have over ten million members. The Decree on Consumers' Co-operative Societies, issued the other day, is an extremely significant phenomenon, which strikingly illustrates the peculiar position and the specific tasks of the Soviet Socialist Republic at the present moment.

The decree is an agreement with the bourgeois co-operative societies and the workers' co-operative societies which still adhere to the bourgeois point of view. It is an agreement, or compromise, firstly because the representatives of the above-mentioned institutions not only took part in discussing the decree, but actually had a decisive say in the matter, for the parts of the decree which were strongly opposed by these institutions were dropped. Secondly, the essence of the compromise is that the Soviet government has abandoned the principle of admission of new members to co-operative societies without entrance fees (which is the only consistently proletarian principle): it has also abandoned the idea of uniting the whole population of a given locality in a *single* co-operative society. Contrary to this principle, which is the only socialist principle and which corresponds to the task of abolishing classes, the "working-class co-operative societies" (which in this case call themselves "class" societies only because they subordinate themselves to the class interests of the bourgeoisie) were given the right to continue to exist. Finally, the Soviet government's proposal to expel the bourgeoisie entirely from the boards of the co-operative societies was also considerably modified, and only owners of private capitalist trading and industrial enterprises were forbidden to serve on the boards.

Had the proletariat, acting through the Soviet government, managed to organise accounting and control on a national scale, or at least laid the foundation for such control, it would not have been necessary to make such compromises. Through the food departments of the Soviets, through the supply organisations under the Soviets we should have organised the population into a single co-operative society under proletarian management. We should have done this without the assistance of the bourgeois co-operative societies, without making any concession to the purely bourgeois principle which prompts the workers' co-operative

societies to remain workers' societies *side by side* with bourgeois societies, *instead of* subordinating these bourgeois co-operative societies entirely to themselves, merging the two together and taking the *entire* management of the society and the supervision of the consumption of the rich *in their own* hands.

In concluding such an agreement with the bourgeois co-operative societies, the Soviet government concretely defined its tactical aims and its peculiar methods of action in the present stage of development as follows: by directing the bourgeois elements, utilising them, making certain partial concessions to them, we create the conditions for further progress that will be slower than we at first anticipated, but sure, with the base and lines of communication better secured and with the positions which have been won better consolidated. The Soviets can (*and should*) now gauge their successes in the field of socialist construction, among other things, by extremely clear, simple and practical standards, namely, in how many communities (communes or villages, or blocks of houses, etc.) co-operative societies have been organised, and to what extent their development has reached the point of embracing the whole population.

## RAISING THE PRODUCTIVITY OF LABOUR

In every socialist revolution, after the proletariat has solved the problem of capturing power, and to the extent that the task of expropriating the expropriators and suppressing their resistance has been carried out in the main, there necessarily comes to the forefront the fundamental task of creating a social system superior to capitalism, namely, raising the productivity of labour, and in this connection (and for this purpose) securing better organisation of labour. Our Soviet state is precisely in the position where, thanks to the victories over the exploiters—from Kerensky to Kornilov—it is able to approach this task directly, to tackle it in earnest. And here it becomes immediately clear that while it is possible to take over the central government in a few days, while it is possible to suppress the military resistance (and sabotage) of the exploiters even in different parts of a great country in a few weeks, the capital solution of the problem of raising the productivity of labour requires, at all events (particularly after a most terrible and devastating war), several years. The protracted nature of the work is certainly dictated by objective circumstances.

The raising of the productivity of labour first of all requires that the material basis of large-scale industry shall be assured, namely, the development of the production of fuel, iron, the engineering and chemical industries. The Russian Soviet Repub-

lic enjoys the favourable position of having at its command, even after the Brest peace, enormous reserves of ore (in the Urals), fuel in Western Siberia (coal), in the Caucasus and the South-East (oil), in Central Russia (peat), enormous timber reserves, water power, raw materials for the chemical industry (Karabugaz), etc. The development of these natural resources by methods of modern technology will provide the basis for the unprecedented progress of the productive forces.

Another condition for raising the productivity of labour is, firstly, the raising of the educational and cultural level of the mass of the population. This is now taking place extremely rapidly, a fact which those who are blinded by bourgeois routine are unable to see; they are unable to understand what an urge towards enlightenment and initiative is now developing among the "lower ranks" of the people thanks to the Soviet form of organisation. Secondly, a condition for economic revival is the raising of the working people's discipline, their skill, the effectiveness, the intensity of labour and its better organisation.

In this respect the situation is particularly bad and even hopeless if we are to believe those who have allowed themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie or by those who are serving the bourgeoisie for their own ends. These people do not understand that there has not been, nor could there be, a revolution in which the supporters of the old system did not raise a howl about chaos, anarchy, etc. Naturally, among the people who have only just thrown off an unprecedentedly savage yoke there is deep and widespread seething and ferment; the working out of new principles of labour discipline by the people is a very protracted process, and this process could not even start until complete victory had been achieved over the landowners and the bourgeoisie.

We, however, without in the least yielding to the despair (it is often false despair) which is spread by the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals (who have despaired of retaining their old privileges), must under no circumstances conceal an obvious evil. On the contrary, we shall expose it and intensify the Soviet methods of combating it, because the victory of socialism is inconceivable without the victory of proletarian conscious discipline over spontaneous petty-bourgeois anarchy, this real guarantee of a possible restoration of Kerenskyism and Kornilovism.

The more class-conscious vanguard of the Russian proletariat has already set itself the task of raising labour discipline. For example, both the Central Committee of the Metalworkers' Union and the Central Council of Trade Unions have begun to draft the necessary measures and decrees. This work must be supported and pushed ahead with all speed. We must raise the

question of piece-work and apply and test it in practice; we must raise the question of applying much of what is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system; we must make wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out, or to the amount of work done by the railways, the water transport system, etc., etc.

The Russian is a bad worker compared with people in advanced countries. It could not be otherwise under the tsarist regime and in view of the persistence of the hangover from serfdom. The task that the Soviet government must set the people in all its scope is—learn to work. The Taylor system, the last word of capitalism in this respect, like all capitalist progress, is a combination of the refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation and a number of the greatest scientific achievements in the field of analysing mechanical motions during work, the elimination of superfluous and awkward motions, the elaboration of correct methods of work, the introduction of the best system of accounting and control, etc. The Soviet Republic must at all costs adopt all that is valuable in the achievements of science and technology in this field. The possibility of building socialism depends exactly upon our success in combining the Soviet power and the Soviet organisation of administration with the up-to-date achievements of capitalism. We must organise in Russia the study and teaching of the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our own ends. At the same time, in working to raise the productivity of labour, we must take into account the specific features of the transition period from capitalism to socialism, which, on the one hand, require that the foundations be laid of the socialist organisation of competition, and, on the other hand, require the use of compulsion, so that the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat shall not be desecrated by the practice of a lily-livered proletarian government.

## THE ORGANISATION OF COMPETITION

Among the absurdities which the bourgeoisie are fond of spreading about socialism is the allegation that socialists deny the importance of competition. In fact, it is only socialism which, by abolishing classes, and, consequently, by abolishing the enslavement of the people, for the first time opens the way for competition on a really mass scale. And it is precisely the Soviet form of organisation, by ensuring transition from the formal democracy of the bourgeois republic to real participation of the mass of working people in *administration*, that for the first time puts competition on a broad basis. It is much easier to organise this in the political field than in the economic field; but for the success of socialism, it is the economic field that matters.

Take, for example, a means of organising competition such as publicity. The bourgeois republic ensures publicity only formally; in practice, it subordinates the press to capital, entertains the "mob" with sensationalist political trash and conceals what takes place in the workshops, in commercial transactions, contracts, etc., behind a veil of "trade secrets", which protect "the sacred right of property". The Soviet government has abolished trade secrets; it has taken a new path; but we have done hardly anything to utilise publicity for the purpose of encouraging economic competition. While ruthlessly suppressing the thoroughly mendacious and insolently slanderous bourgeois press, we must set to work systematically to create a press that will not entertain and fool the people with political sensation and trivialities, but which will submit the questions of everyday economic life to the people's judgement and assist in the serious study of those questions. Every factory, every village is a producers' and consumers' commune, whose right and duty it is to apply the general Soviet laws in their own way ("in their own way", not in the sense of violating them, but in the sense that they can apply them in various forms) and in their own way to solve the problem of accounting in the production and distribution of goods. Under capitalism, this was the "private affair" of the individual capitalist, landowner or kulak. Under the Soviet system, it is not a private affair, but a most important affair of state.

We have scarcely yet started on the enormous, difficult but rewarding task of organising competition between communes, of introducing accounting and publicity in the process of the production of grain, clothes and other things, of transforming dry, dead, bureaucratic accounts into living examples, some repulsive, others attractive. Under the capitalist mode of production, the significance of individual example, save the example of a co-operative workshop, was inevitably very much restricted, and only those imbued with petty-bourgeois illusions could dream of "correcting" capitalism through the example of virtuous institutions. After political power has passed to the proletariat, after the expropriators have been expropriated, the situation radically changes and—as prominent socialists have repeatedly pointed out—force of example for the first time is able to influence the people. Model communes must and will serve as educators, teachers, helping to raise the backward communes. The press must serve as an instrument of socialist construction, give publicity to the successes achieved by the model communes in all their details, must study the causes of these successes, the methods of management these communes employ, and, on the other hand, must put on the "black list" those com-



munes which persist in the "traditions of capitalism", i.e., anarchy, laziness, disorder and profiteering. In capitalist society, statistics were entirely a matter for "government servants", or for narrow specialists; we must carry statistics to the people and make them popular so that the working people themselves may gradually learn to understand and see how long and in what way it is necessary to work, how much time and in what way one may rest, so that *the comparison of the business results* of the various communes may become a matter of general interest and study, and that the most outstanding communes may be rewarded immediately (by reducing the working day, raising remuneration, placing a larger amount of cultural or aesthetic facilities or values at their disposal, etc.).

When a new class comes on to the historical scene as the leader and guide of society, a period of violent "rocking", shocks, struggle and storm, on the one hand, and a period of uncertain steps, experiments, wavering, hesitation in regard to the selection of new methods corresponding to new objective circumstances, on the other, are inevitable. The moribund feudal nobility avenged themselves on the bourgeoisie which vanquished them and took their place, not only by conspiracies and attempts at rebellion and restoration, but also by pouring ridicule over the lack of skill, the clumsiness and the mistakes of the "upstarts" and the "insolent" who dared to take over the "sacred helm" of state without the centuries of training which the princes, barons, nobles and dignitaries had had; in exactly the same way the Kornilovs and Kerenskys, the Gotzes and Martovs, the whole of that fraternity of heroes of bourgeois swindling or bourgeois scepticism, avenge themselves on the working class of Russia for having had the "audacity" to take power.

Of course, not weeks, but long months and years are required for a new social class, especially a class which up to now has been oppressed and crushed by poverty and ignorance, to get used to its new position, look around, organise its work and promote its *own* organisers. It is understandable that the Party which leads the revolutionary proletariat has not been able to acquire the experience and habits of large organisational undertakings embracing millions and tens of millions of citizens; the remoulding of the old, almost exclusively agitators' habits is a very lengthy process. But there is nothing impossible in this, and as soon as the necessity for a change is clearly appreciated, as soon as there is firm determination to effect the change and perseverance in pursuing a great and difficult aim, we shall achieve it. There is an enormous amount of organising talent among the "people", i.e., among the workers and the peasants who do not exploit the labour of others. Capital

crushed these talented people in thousands; it killed their talent and threw them on to the scrap-heap. We are not yet able to find them, encourage them, put them on their feet, promote them. But we shall learn to do so if we set about it with all-out revolutionary enthusiasm, without which there can be no victorious revolutions.

No profound and mighty popular movement has ever occurred in history without dirty scum rising to the top, without adventurers and rogues, boasters and ranters attaching themselves to the inexperienced innovators, without absurd muddle and fuss, without individual "leaders" trying to deal with twenty matters at once and not finishing any of them. Let the lap-dogs of bourgeois society, from Belorussov to Martov, squeal and yelp about every extra chip that is sent flying in cutting down the big, old wood. What else are lap-dogs for if not to yelp at the proletarian elephant? Let them yelp. We shall go our way and try as carefully and as patiently as possible to test and discover real organisers, people with sober and practical minds, people who combine loyalty to socialism with ability without fuss (and in spite of muddle and fuss) to get a large number of people working together steadily and concertedly within the framework of Soviet organisation. *Only* such people, after they have been tested a dozen times, by being transferred from the simplest to the more difficult tasks, should be promoted to the responsible posts of leaders of the people's labour, leaders of administration. We have not yet learned to do this, but we shall learn

### **"HARMONIOUS ORGANISATION" AND DICTATORSHIP**

The resolution adopted by the recent Moscow Congress of Soviets advanced as the primary task of the moment the establishment of a "harmonious organisation", and the tightening of discipline.\* Everyone now readily "votes for" and "subscribes to" resolutions of this kind; but usually people do not think over the fact that the application of such resolutions calls for coercion—coercion precisely in the form of dictatorship. And yet it would be extremely stupid and absurdly utopian to assume that the transition from capitalism to socialism is possible without coercion and without dictatorship. Marx's theory very definitely opposed this petty-bourgeois-democratic and anarchist absurdity long ago. And Russia of 1917-18 confirms the correctness of Marx's theory in this respect so strikingly, palpably and imposingly that only those who are hopelessly dull or who have obstinately

---

\* See p 584 of the present volume—*Ed.*

decided to turn their backs on the truth can be under any misapprehension concerning this. Either the dictatorship of Kornilov (if we take him as the Russian type of bourgeois Cavaignac), or the dictatorship of the proletariat—any other choice is *out of the question* for a country which is developing at an extremely rapid rate with extremely sharp turns and amidst desperate ruin created by one of the most horrible wars in history. Every solution that offers a middle path is either a deception of the people by the bourgeoisie—for the bourgeoisie dare not tell the truth, dare not say that they need Kornilov—or an expression of the dull-wittedness of the petty-bourgeois democrats, of the Chernovs, Tseretelis and Martovs, who chatter about the unity of democracy, the dictatorship of democracy, the general democratic front, and similar nonsense. Those whom even the progress of the Russian Revolution of 1917-18 has not taught that a middle course is impossible, must be given up for lost.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to see that during every transition from capitalism to socialism, dictatorship is necessary for two main reasons, or along two main channels. Firstly, capitalism cannot be defeated and eradicated without the ruthless suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, who cannot at once be deprived of their wealth, of their advantages of organisation and knowledge, and consequently for a fairly long period will inevitably try to overthrow the hated rule of the poor; secondly, every great revolution, and a socialist revolution in particular, even if there is no external war, is inconceivable without internal war, i.e., civil war, which is even more devastating than external war, and involves thousands and millions of cases of wavering and desertion from one side to another, implies a state of extreme indefiniteness, lack of equilibrium and chaos. And of course, all the elements of disintegration of the old society, which are inevitably very numerous and connected mainly with the petty bourgeoisie (because it is the petty bourgeoisie that every war and every crisis ruins and destroys first), are bound to "reveal themselves" during such a profound revolution. And these elements of disintegration *cannot* "reveal themselves" otherwise than in an increase of crime, hooliganism, corruption, profiteering and outrages of every kind. To put these down requires time and *requires an iron hand*.

There has not been a single great revolution in history in which the people did not instinctively realise this and did not show salutary firmness by shooting thieves on the spot. The misfortune of previous revolutions was that the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people, which sustained them in their state of tension and gave them the strength to suppress ruthlessly the elements of disintegration, did not last long. The social, i.e., the class, reason

*for this instability of the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people was the weakness of the proletariat, which alone is able (if it is sufficiently numerous, class-conscious and disciplined) to win over to its side the majority of the working and exploited people (the majority of the poor, to speak more simply and popularly) and retain power sufficiently long to suppress completely all the exploiters as well as all the elements of disintegration.*

It was this historical experience of all revolutions, it was this world-historic—economic and political—lesson that Marx summed up when he gave his short, sharp, concise and expressive formula: dictatorship of the proletariat. And the fact that the Russian revolution has been correct in its approach to this world-historic task *has been proved* by the victorious progress of the Soviet form of organisation among all the peoples and tongues of Russia. For Soviet power is nothing but an organisational form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the dictatorship of the advanced class, which raises to a new democracy and to independent participation in the administration of the state tens upon tens of millions of working and exploited people, who by their own experience learn to regard the disciplined and class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat as their most reliable leader.

Dictatorship, however, is a big word, and big words should not be thrown about carelessly. Dictatorship is iron rule, government that is revolutionarily bold, swift and ruthless in suppressing both exploiters and hooligans. But our government is excessively mild, very often it resembles jelly more than iron. We must not forget for a moment that the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois element is fighting against the Soviet system in two ways; on the one hand, it is operating from without, by the methods of the Savinkovs, Gotzes, Gegechkoris and Kornilovs, by conspiracies and rebellions, and by their filthy “ideological” reflection, the flood of lies and slander in the Constitutional-Democratic, Right Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik press; on the other hand, this element operates from within and takes advantage of every manifestation of disintegration, of every weakness, in order to bribe, to increase indiscipline, laxity and chaos. The nearer we approach the complete military suppression of the bourgeoisie, the more dangerous does the element of petty-bourgeois anarchy become. And the fight against this element cannot be waged solely with the aid of propaganda and agitation, solely by organising competition and by selecting organisers. The struggle must also be waged by means of coercion.

As the fundamental task of the government becomes, not military suppression, but administration, the typical manifestation of suppression and compulsion will be, not shooting on the spot, but trial by court. In this respect also the revolutionary

people after October 25, 1917 took the right path and demonstrated the viability of the revolution by setting up their own workers' and peasants' courts, even before the decrees dissolving the bourgeois bureaucratic judiciary were passed. But our revolutionary and people's courts are extremely, incredibly weak. One feels that we have not yet done away with the people's attitude towards the courts as towards something official and alien, an attitude inherited from the yoke of the landowners and of the bourgeoisie. It is not yet sufficiently realised that the courts are an organ which enlists precisely the poor, every one of them, in the work of state administration (for the work of the courts is one of the functions of state administration), that the courts are an *organ of the power* of the proletariat and of the poor peasants, that the courts are an instrument *for inculcating discipline*. There is not yet sufficient appreciation of the simple and obvious fact that if the principal misfortunes of Russia at the present time are hunger and unemployment, these misfortunes cannot be overcome by spurts, but only by comprehensive, all-embracing, country-wide organisation and discipline in order to increase the output of bread for the people and bread for industry (fuel), to transport these in good time to the places where they are required, and to distribute them properly; and it is not fully appreciated that, consequently, it is *those* who violate labour discipline at any factory, in any undertaking, in any matter, who are *responsible* for the sufferings caused by the famine and unemployment, that we must know how to find the guilty ones, to bring them to trial and ruthlessly punish them. Where the petty-bourgeois anarchy against which we must now wage a most persistent struggle makes itself felt is in the failure to appreciate the economic and political connection between famine and unemployment, on the one hand, and general laxity in matters of organisation and discipline, on the other—in the tenacity of the *small-proprietor* outlook, namely, I'll grab all I can for myself; the rest can go hang.

In the rail transport service, which perhaps most strikingly embodies the economic ties of an organism created by large-scale capitalism, the struggle between the element of petty-bourgeois laxity and proletarian organisation is particularly evident. The "administrative" elements provide a host of saboteurs and bribe-takers; the best part of the proletarian elements fight for discipline; but among both elements there are, of course, many waverers and "weak" characters who are unable to withstand the "temptation" of profiteering, bribery, personal gain obtained by spoiling the whole apparatus, upon the proper working of which the victory over famine and unemployment depends.

The struggle that has been developing around the recent decree on the management of the railways, the decree which grants indi-

vidual executives dictatorial powers (or "unlimited" powers), is characteristic. The conscious (and to a large extent, probably, unconscious) representatives of petty-bourgeois laxity would like to see in this granting of "unlimited" (i.e., dictatorial) powers to individuals a departure from the collegiate principle, from democracy and from the principles of Soviet government. Here and there, among Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, a positively hooligan agitation, i.e., agitation appealing to the base instincts and to the small proprietor's urge to "grab all he can", has been developed against the dictatorship decree. The question has become one of really enormous significance. Firstly, the question of principle, namely, is the appointment of individuals, dictators with unlimited powers, in general compatible with the fundamental principles of Soviet government? Secondly, what relation has this case—this precedent, if you will—to the special tasks of government in the present concrete situation? We must deal very thoroughly with both these questions.

That in the history of revolutionary movements the dictatorship of individuals was very often the expression, the vehicle, the channel of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes has been shown by the irrefutable experience of history. Undoubtedly, the dictatorship of individuals was compatible with bourgeois democracy. On this point, however, the bourgeois denigrators of the Soviet system, as well as their petty-bourgeois henchmen, always display sleight of hand: on the one hand, they declare the Soviet system to be something absurd, anarchistic and savage, and carefully pass over in silence all our historical examples and theoretical arguments which prove that the Soviets are a higher form of democracy, and what is more, the beginning of a *socialist* form of democracy; on the other hand, they demand of us a higher democracy than bourgeois democracy and say: personal dictatorship is absolutely incompatible with your, Bolshevik (i.e., not bourgeois, *but socialist*), Soviet democracy.

These are exceedingly poor arguments. If we are not anarchists, we must admit that the state, *that is, coercion*, is necessary for the transition from capitalism to socialism. The form of coercion is determined by the degree of development of the given revolutionary class, and also by special circumstances, such as, for example, the legacy of a long and reactionary war and the forms of resistance put up by the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie. There is, therefore, absolutely *no* contradiction in principle between Soviet (*that is, socialist*) democracy and the exercise of dictatorial powers by individuals. The difference between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois dictatorship is that the former strikes at the exploiting minority in the interests of the exploited majority, and that it is exercised—*also through indivi-*

*duals*—not only by the working and exploited people, but also by organisations which are built in such a way as to rouse these people to history-making activity. (The Soviet organisations are organisations of this kind.)

In regard to the second question, concerning the significance of individual dictatorial powers from the point of view of the specific tasks of the present moment, it must be said that large-scale machine industry—which is precisely the material source, the productive source, the foundation of socialism—calls for absolute and strict *unity of will*, which directs the joint labours of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. The technical, economic and historical necessity of this is obvious, and all those who have thought about socialism have always regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism. But how can strict unity of will be ensured? By thousands subordinating their will to the will of one.

Given ideal class-consciousness and discipline on the part of those participating in the common work, this subordination would be something like the mild leadership of a conductor of an orchestra. It may assume the sharp forms of a dictatorship if ideal discipline and class-consciousness are lacking. But be that as it may, *unquestioning subordination* to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organised on the pattern of large-scale machine industry. On the railways it is twice and three times as necessary. In this transition from one political task to another, which *on the surface* is totally dissimilar to the first, lies the whole originality of the present situation. The revolution has only just smashed the oldest, strongest and heaviest of fetters, to which the people submitted under duress. That was yesterday. Today, however, the same revolution demands—precisely in the interests of its development and consolidation, precisely in the interests of socialism—that the people *unquestioningly obey the single will* of the leaders of labour. Of course, such a transition cannot be made at one step. Clearly, it can be achieved only as a result of tremendous jolts, shocks, reversion to old ways, the enormous exertion of effort on the part of the proletarian vanguard, which is leading the people to the new ways. Those who drop into the philistine hysterics of *Novaya Zhizn* or *Uperyod*,<sup>272</sup> *Dyelo Naroda* or *Nash Uek*<sup>273</sup> do not stop to think about this.

Take the psychology of the average, ordinary representative of the toiling and exploited masses, compare it with the objective, material conditions of his life in society. Before the October Revolution he did *not* see a single instance of the propertied, exploiting classes making any real sacrifice for him, giving up anything for his benefit. He did *not* see them giving him the land and liberty that had been repeatedly promised him, giving him peace, sacrificing "Great Power" interests and the interests of Great

Power secret treaties, sacrificing capital and profits. He saw this only *after* October 25, 1917, when he took it himself by force, and had to defend by force what he had taken, against the Kerenskys, Gotzes, Gegechkoris, Dutovs and Kornilovs. Naturally, for a certain time, all his attention, all his thoughts, all his spiritual strength, were concentrated on taking a breath, on unbending his back, on straightening his shoulders, on taking the blessings of life that were there for the taking, and that had always been denied him by the now overthrown exploiters. Of course, a certain amount of time is required to enable the ordinary working man not only to see for himself, not only to become convinced, but also to feel that he cannot simply "take", snatch, grab things, that this leads to increased disruption, to ruin, to the return of the Kornilovs. The corresponding change in the conditions of life (and consequently in the psychology) of the ordinary working men is only just beginning. And our whole task, the task of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), which is the class-conscious spokesman for the strivings of the exploited for emancipation, is to appreciate this change, to understand that it is necessary, to stand at the head of the exhausted people who are wearily seeking a way out and lead them along the true path, along the path of labour discipline, along the path of co-ordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings *about* the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator, *during* the work.

The "mania for meetings" is an object of the ridicule, and still more often of the spiteful hissing of the bourgeoisie, the Mensheviks, the *Novaya Zhizn* people, who see only the chaos, the confusion and the outbursts of small-proprietor egoism. But without the discussions at public meetings the mass of the oppressed could never have changed from the discipline forced upon them by the exploiters to conscious, voluntary discipline. The airing of questions at public meetings is the genuine democracy of the working people, their way of unbending their backs, their awakening to a new life, their first steps along the road which they themselves have cleared of vipers (the exploiters, the imperialists, the landowners and capitalists) and which they want to learn to build themselves, in their own way, for themselves, on the principles of their own *Soviet*, and not alien, not aristocratic, not bourgeois rule. It required precisely the October victory of the working people over the exploiters, it required a whole historical period in which the working people themselves could first of all discuss the new conditions of life and the new tasks, in order to make possible the durable transition to superior forms of labour discipline, to the conscious appreciation of the necessity for the dictatorship of the proletariat, to unquestioning obedience to the orders of individual representatives of the Soviet government during the work.



This transition has now begun.

We have successfully fulfilled the first task of the revolution; we have seen how the mass of working people evolved in themselves the fundamental condition for its success: they united their efforts against the exploiters in order to overthrow them. Stages like that of October 1905, February and October 1917 are of world-historic significance.

We have successfully fulfilled the second task of the revolution: to awaken, to raise those very "lower ranks" of society whom the exploiters had pushed down, and who only after October 25, 1917 obtained complete freedom to overthrow the exploiters and to begin to take stock of things and arrange life in their own way. The airing of questions at public meetings by the most oppressed and downtrodden, by the least educated mass of working people, their coming over to the side of the Bolsheviks, their setting up everywhere of their own Soviet organisations—this was the second great stage of the revolution.

The third stage is now beginning. We must consolidate what we ourselves have won, what we ourselves have decreed, made law, discussed, planned—consolidate all this in stable forms of *everyday labour discipline*. This is the most difficult, but the most gratifying task, because only its fulfilment will give us a socialist system. We must learn to combine the "public meeting" democracy of the working people—turbulent, surging, overflowing its banks like a spring flood—with *iron* discipline while at work, with *unquestioning obedience* to the will of a single person, the Soviet leader, while at work.

We have not yet learned to do this.

We shall learn it.

Yesterday we were menaced by the restoration of bourgeois exploitation, personified by the Kornilovs, Gotzes, Dutovs, Gegechkoris and Bogayevskys. We conquered them. This restoration, this very same restoration menaces us today in another form, in the form of the element of petty-bourgeois laxity and anarchism, or small-proprietor "it's not my business" psychology, in the form of the daily, petty, but numerous sorties and attacks of this element against proletarian discipline. We must, and we shall, vanquish this element of petty-bourgeois anarchy.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET ORGANISATION

The socialist character of Soviet, i.e., *proletarian*, democracy, as concretely applied today, lies first in the fact that the electors are the working and exploited people; the bourgeoisie is excluded. Secondly, it lies in the fact that all bureaucratic formalities and restrictions of elections are abolished; the people

themselves determine the order and time of elections, and are completely free to recall any elected person. Thirdly, it lies in the creation of the best mass organisation of the vanguard of the working people, i.e., the proletariat engaged in large-scale industry, which enables it to lead the vast mass of the exploited, to draw them into independent political life, to educate them politically by their own experience; therefore for the first time a start is made by the *entire* population in learning the art of administration, and in beginning to administer.

These are the principal distinguishing features of the democracy now applied in Russia, which is a higher *type* of democracy, a break with the bourgeois distortion of democracy, transition to socialist democracy and to the conditions in which the state can begin to wither away.

It goes without saying that the element of petty-bourgeois disorganisation (which must *inevitably* be apparent to some extent in *every* proletarian revolution, and which is especially apparent in our revolution, owing to the petty-bourgeois character of our country, its backwardness and the consequences of a reactionary war) cannot but leave its impress upon the Soviets as well.

We must work unremittingly to develop the organisation of the Soviets and of the Soviet government. There is a petty-bourgeois tendency to transform the members of the Soviets into "parliamentarians", or else into bureaucrats. We must combat this by drawing *all* the members of the Soviets into the practical work of administration. In many places the departments of the Soviets are gradually merging with the Commissariats. Our aim is to draw *the whole of the poor* into the practical work of administration, and all steps that are taken in this direction—the more varied they are, the better—should be carefully recorded, studied, systematised, tested by wider experience and embodied in law. Our aim is to ensure that *every* toiler, having finished his eight hours' "task" in productive labour, shall perform state duties *without pay*; the transition to this is particularly difficult, but this transition alone can guarantee the final consolidation of socialism. Naturally, the novelty and difficulty of the change lead to an abundance of steps being taken, as it were, gropingly, to an abundance of mistakes, vacillation—without this, any marked progress is impossible. The reason why the present position seems peculiar to many of those who would like to be regarded as socialists is that they have been accustomed to contrasting capitalism with socialism abstractly, and that they profoundly put between the two the word "leap" (some of them, recalling fragments of what they have read of Engels's writings, still more profoundly add the phrase "leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom"<sup>274</sup>). The majority of these so-called socialists, who have "read in books" about socialism but

who have never seriously thought over the matter, are unable to consider that by "leap" the teachers of socialism meant turning-points on a world-historical scale, and that leaps of this kind extend over decades and even longer periods. Naturally, in such times, the notorious "intelligentsia" provides an infinite number of mourners of the dead. Some mourn over the Constituent Assembly, others mourn over bourgeois discipline, others again mourn over the capitalist system, still others mourn over the cultured landowner, and still others again mourn over imperialist Great Power policy, etc., etc.

The real interest of the epoch of great leaps lies in the fact that the abundance of fragments of the old, which sometimes accumulate more rapidly than the rudiments (not always immediately discernible) of the new, calls for the ability to discern what is most important in the line or chain of development. History knows moments when the most important thing for the success of the revolution is to heap up as large a quantity of the fragments as possible, i.e., to blow up as many of the old institutions as possible; moments arise when enough has been blown up and the next task is to perform the "prosaic" (for the petty-bourgeois revolutionary, the "boring") task of clearing away the fragments; and moments arise when the careful nursing of the rudiments of the new system, which are growing amidst the wreckage on a soil which as yet has been badly cleared of rubble, is the most important thing.

It is not enough to be a revolutionary and an adherent of socialism or a Communist in general. You must be able at each particular moment to find the particular link in the chain which you must grasp with all your might in order to hold the whole chain and to prepare firmly for the transition to the next link, the order of the links, their form, the manner in which they are linked together, the way they differ from each other in the historical chain of events, are not as simple and not as meaningless as those in an ordinary chain made by a smith.

The fight against the bureaucratic distortion of the Soviet form of organisation is assured by the firmness of the connection between the Soviets and the "people", meaning by that the working and exploited people, and by the flexibility and elasticity of this connection. Even in the most democratic capitalist republics in the world, the poor never regard the bourgeois parliament as "their" institution. But the Soviets are "theirs" and not alien institutions to the mass of workers and peasants. The modern "Social-Democrats" of the Scheidemann or, what is almost the same thing, of the Martov type are repelled by the Soviets, and they are drawn towards the respectable bourgeois parliament, or to the Constituent Assembly, in the same way as Turgenev, sixty years ago, was

drawn towards a moderate monarchist and noblemen's Constitution and was repelled by the peasant democracy of Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky.

It is the closeness of the Soviets to the "people", to the working people, that creates the special forms of recall and other means of control from below which must be most zealously developed now. For example, the Councils of Public Education, as periodical conferences of Soviet electors and their delegates called to discuss and control the activities of the Soviet authorities in this field, deserve full sympathy and support. Nothing could be sillier than to transform the Soviets into something congealed and self-contained. The more resolutely we now have to stand for a ruthlessly firm government, for the dictatorship of individuals *in definite processes of work*, in definite aspects of *purely executive* functions, the more varied must be the forms and methods of control from below in order to counteract every shadow of a possibility of distorting the principles of Soviet government, in order repeatedly and tirelessly to weed out bureaucracy.

## CONCLUSION

An extraordinarily difficult, complex and dangerous situation in international affairs; the necessity of manoeuvring and retreating; a period of waiting for new outbreaks of the revolution which is maturing in the West at a painfully slow pace; within the country a period of slow construction and ruthless "tightening up", of prolonged and persistent struggle waged by stern, proletarian discipline against the menacing element of petty-bourgeois laxity and anarchy—these in brief are the distinguishing features of the special stage of the socialist revolution in which we are now living. This is the link in the historical chain of events which we must at present grasp with all our might in order to prove equal to the tasks that confront us before passing to the next link to which we are drawn by a special brightness, the brightness of the victories of the international proletarian revolution.

Try to compare with the ordinary everyday concept "revolutionary" the slogans that follow from the specific conditions of the present stage, namely, manoeuvre, retreat, wait, build slowly, ruthlessly tighten up, rigorously discipline, smash laxity. . . . Is it surprising that when certain "revolutionaries" hear this they are seized with noble indignation and begin to "thunder" abuse at us for forgetting the traditions of the October Revolution, for compromising with the bourgeois experts, for compromising with the bourgeoisie, for being petty bourgeois, reformists, and so on and so forth?

The misfortune of these sorry "revolutionaries" is that even those of them who are prompted by the best motives in the world and are absolutely loyal to the cause of socialism fail to understand the particular, and particularly "unpleasant", condition that a backward country, which has been lacerated by a reactionary and disastrous war and which began the socialist revolution long before the more advanced countries, inevitably has to pass through; they lack stamina in the difficult moments of a difficult transition. Naturally, it is the "Left Socialist-Revolutionaries" who are acting as an "official" opposition of *this* kind against our Party. Of course, there are and always will be individual exceptions from group and class types. But social types remain. In the land in which the small-proprietor population greatly predominates over the purely proletarian population, the difference between the proletarian revolutionary and petty-bourgeois revolutionary will inevitably make itself felt, and from time to time will make itself felt very sharply. The petty-bourgeois revolutionary wavers and vacillates at every turn of events; he is an ardent revolutionary in March 1917 and praises "coalition" in May, hates the Bolsheviks (or laments over their "adventurism") in July and apprehensively turns away from them at the end of October, supports them in December, and, finally, in March and April 1918 such types, more often than not, turn up their noses contemptuously and say: "I am not one of those who sing hymns to 'organic' work, to practicalness and gradualism."

The social origin of such types is the small proprietor, who has been driven to frenzy by the horrors of war, by sudden ruin, by unprecedented torments of famine and devastation, who hysterically rushes about seeking a way out, seeking salvation, places his confidence in the proletariat and supports it one moment and the next gives way to fits of despair. We must clearly understand and firmly remember the fact that socialism cannot be built on such a social basis. The only class that can lead the working and exploited people is the class that unswervingly follows its path without losing courage and without giving way to despair even at the most difficult, arduous and dangerous stages. Hysterical impulses are of no use to us. What we need is the steady advance of the iron battalions of the proletariat.

Written between April 13  
and 26, 1918

Published on April 28, 1918  
in *Pravda* No. 83 and in  
the Supplement to *Izvestia*  
*UTsIA* No. 85

Signed *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works* Vol. 27,  
pp. 235-7

---

## DRAFT PLAN OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL WORK<sup>275</sup>

The Supreme Economic Council should immediately give its instructions to the Academy of Sciences, which has launched a systematic study and investigation of the natural productive forces\* of Russia, to set up a number of expert commissions for the speediest possible compilation of a plan for the reorganisation of industry and the economic progress of Russia.

The plan should include:

the rational *distribution* of industry in Russia from the standpoint of proximity to raw materials and the lowest consumption of labour-power in the transition from the processing of the raw materials to all subsequent stages in the processing of semi-manufactured goods, up to and including the output of the finished product:

the rational merging and concentration of industry in a few big enterprises from the standpoint of the most up-to-date large-scale industry, especially trusts;

enabling the present Russian Soviet Republic (excluding the Ukraine and the regions occupied by the Germans) as far as possible to provide itself *independently* with *all* the chief items of raw materials and organise main branches of industry;

special attention to the electrification of industry and transport and the application of electricity to farming, and the use of lower grades of fuel (peat, low-grade coal) for the production of electricity, with the lowest possible expenditure on extraction and transport:

water power and wind motors in general and in their application to farming.

Written between April 18 and 25,  
1915

First published on March 4,  
1924 in *Pravda* No. 52

*Collected Works* Vol. 27,  
pp. 320-21

\* *Publication* of this material must be accelerated to the utmost; a note about this must be sent to the Commissariat for Education, the Printing Workers' Trade Union and the Commissariat for Labour.

Академии наук, как высшей научной, теоретической и организационной организации, которая должна руководить и направлять работу всех научных учреждений, а также и работу всех научных работников.

Важнейшей задачей Академии наук является разработка и осуществление программы научных исследований, а также организация и руководство работой научных учреждений.

В состав Академии наук должны входить все научные учреждения, которые занимаются фундаментальными исследованиями.

---

11

Каждому ученому надлежит иметь высшее образование и быть членом Академии наук, а также иметь право на получение стипендии и на участие в работе Академии наук.

First page of the manuscript of Lenin's "Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work",  
April 1918  
Reduced

---

## SIX THESES ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT<sup>276</sup>

1 The international position of the Soviet Republic is extremely difficult and critical, because the deepest and fundamental interests of international capital and imperialism induce it to strive not only for a military onslaught on Russia, but also for an agreement on the partition of Russia and the strangulation of the Soviet power.

Only the intensification of the imperialist slaughter of the peoples in Western Europe and the imperialist rivalry between Japan and America in the Far East paralyse, or restrain, these aspirations, and then only partially, and only for a certain, probably short, time.

Therefore, the tactics of the Soviet Republic must be, on the one hand, to exert every effort to ensure the country's speediest economic recovery, to increase its defence capacity, to build up a powerful socialist army; on the other hand, in international policy, the tactics must be those of manoeuvring, retreat, waiting for the moment when the international proletarian revolution—which is now maturing more quickly than before in a number of advanced countries—fully matures.

2. In the sphere of domestic policy, the task that comes to the forefront at the present time in conformity with the resolution adopted by the All-Russia Congress of Soviets on March 15, 1918, is the task of organisation. It is this task, in connection with the new and higher organisation of production and distribution on the basis of socialised large-scale machine (labour) production, that constitutes the chief content—and chief condition of complete victory—of the socialist revolution that was begun in Russia on October 25, 1917.

3. From the purely political point of view, the essence of the present situation is that the task of convincing the working people of Russia that the programme of the socialist revolution is



correct and the task of winning Russia from the exploiters for the working people have, in main and fundamental outline, been carried out, and the chief problem that comes to the forefront now is—how to administer Russia. The organisation of proper administration, the undeviating fulfilment of the decisions of the Soviet government—this is the urgent task of the Soviets, this is the condition for the complete victory of the Soviet type of state, which it is not enough to proclaim in formal decrees, which it is not enough to establish and introduce in all parts of the country, but which must also be practically organised and tested in the course of the regular, everyday work of administration.

4. In the sphere of the economic building of socialism, the essence of the present situation is that our work of organising the country-wide and all-embracing accounting and control of production and distribution, and of introducing proletarian control of production, lags far behind the direct expropriation of the expropriators—the landowners and capitalists. This is the fundamental fact determining our tasks.

From this it follows, on the one hand, that the struggle against the bourgeoisie is entering a new phase, namely, the centre of gravity is shifting to the organisation of accounting and control. Only in this way is it possible to consolidate all the economic achievements directed against capital, all the measures in nationalising individual branches of the national economy that we have carried out since October; and only in this way it is possible to prepare for the successful consummation of the struggle against the bourgeoisie, i.e., the complete consolidation of socialism.

From this basic fact follows, on the other hand, the explanation as to why the Soviet government was obliged in certain cases to take a step backward, or to agree to compromise with bourgeois tendencies. Such a step backward and departure from the principles of the Paris Commune was, for example, the introduction of high salaries for a number of bourgeois experts. Such a compromise was the agreement with the bourgeois co-operatives concerning steps and measures for gradually bringing the entire population into the co-operatives. Compromises of this kind will be necessary until the proletarian government has put country-wide control and accounting firmly on its feet; and our task is, while not in the least concealing their unfavourable features from the people, to exert efforts to improve accounting and control as the only means and method of completely eliminating all compromises of this kind. Compromises of this kind are needed at the present time as the sole (because we are late with accounting and control) guarantee of slower, but surer progress. When the accounting and control of production and distribution is fully introduced the need for such compromises will disappear.

5. Particular significance now attaches to measures for raising labour discipline and the productivity of labour. Every effort must be exerted for the steps already undertaken in this direction, especially by the trade unions, to be sustained, consolidated and increased. This includes, for example, the introduction of piece-work, the adoption of much that is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, the payment of wages commensurate with the general results of the work of a factory, the exploitation of rail and water transport, etc. This also includes the organisation of competition between individual producers' and consumers' communes, selection of organisers, etc.

6. The proletarian dictatorship is absolutely indispensable during the transition from capitalism to socialism, and in our revolution this truth has been fully confirmed in practice. Dictatorship, however, presupposes a revolutionary government that is really firm and ruthless in crushing both exploiters and hooligans, and our government is too mild. Obedience, and unquestioning obedience at that, during work to the one-man decisions of Soviet directors, of the dictators elected or appointed by Soviet institutions, vested with dictatorial powers (as is demanded, for example, by the railway decree), is far, very far from being guaranteed as yet. This is the effect of the influence of petty-bourgeois anarchy, the anarchy of small-proprietor habits, aspirations and sentiments, which fundamentally contradict proletarian discipline and socialism. The proletariat must concentrate all its class-consciousness on the task of combating this petty-bourgeois anarchy, which is not only directly apparent (in the support given by the bourgeoisie and their hangers-on, the Mensheviks, Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., to every kind of resistance to the proletarian government), but also indirectly apparent (in the historical vacillation displayed on the major questions of policy by both the petty-bourgeois Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the trend in our Party called "Left Communist",<sup>277</sup> which descends to the methods of petty-bourgeois revolutionariness and copies the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries)

Iron discipline and the thorough exercise of proletarian dictatorship against petty-bourgeois vacillation—this is the general and summarising slogan of the moment

Written between April 29  
and May 3, 1918

Published on May 9 1918  
in *Bednota* No 33

*Collected Works* Vol. 97,  
pp 314-17

---

## “LEFT-WING” CHILDISHNESS AND THE PETTY-BOURGEOIS MENTALITY

The publication by a small group of “Left Communists” of their journal, *Kommunist*<sup>278</sup> (No. 1, April 20, 1918), and of their “theses”, strikingly confirms my views expressed in the pamphlet *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*.<sup>\*</sup> There could not be better confirmation, in political literature, of the utter naïveté of the defence of petty-bourgeois sloppiness that is sometimes concealed by “Left” slogans. It is useful and necessary to deal with the arguments of “Left Communists” because they are characteristic of the period we are passing through. They show up with exceptional clarity the negative side of the “core” of this period. They are instructive, because the people we are dealing with are the best of those who have failed to understand the present period, people who by their knowledge and loyalty stand far, far above the *ordinary* representatives of the same mistaken views, namely, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

### I

As a political magnitude, or as a group claiming to play a political role, the “Left Communist” group has presented its “Theses on the Present Situation”. It is a good Marxist custom to give a coherent and complete exposition of the principles underlying one’s views and tactics. And this good Marxist custom has helped to reveal the mistake committed by our “Lefts”, because the mere attempt to argue and not to declaim exposes the unsoundness of their argument.

The first thing that strikes one is the abundance of allusions, hints and evasions with regard to the old question of whether it

<sup>\*</sup> See pp. 586-617 of the present volume —*Ed.*

was right to conclude the Brest Treaty. The "Lefts" dare not put the question in a straightforward manner. They flounder about in a comical fashion, pile argument on argument, fish for reasons, plead that "on the one hand" it may be so, but "on the other hand" it may not, their thoughts wander over all and sundry subjects, they try all the time not to see that they are defeating themselves. The "Lefts" are very careful to quote the figures: twelve votes at the Party Congress against peace, twenty-eight votes in favour, but they discreetly refrain from mentioning that of the hundreds of votes cast at the meeting of the Bolshevik group of the Congress of Soviets they obtained less than one-tenth. They have invented a "theory" that the peace was carried by "the exhausted and declassed elements", while it was opposed by "the workers and peasants of the southern regions, where there was greater vitality in economic life and the supply of bread was more assured". . . . Can one do anything but laugh at this? There is not a word about the voting at the All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets in favour of peace, nor about the social and class character of the typically petty-bourgeois and declassed political conglomeration in Russia who were opposed to peace (the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party). In an utterly childish manner, by means of amusing "scientific" explanations, they try to conceal their own bankruptcy, to conceal the facts, the mere review of which would show that it was precisely the declassed, intellectual "cream" of the party, the élite, who opposed the peace with slogans couched in revolutionary petty-bourgeois phrases, that it was precisely the *mass* of workers and exploited peasants who carried the peace.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the above-mentioned declarations and evasions of the "Lefts" on the question of war and peace, the plain and obvious truth manages to come to light. The authors of the theses are compelled to admit that "the conclusion of peace has for the time being weakened the imperialists' attempts to make a deal on a world scale" (this is inaccurately formulated by the "Lefts", but this is not the place to deal with inaccuracies). "The conclusion of peace has already caused the conflict between the imperialist powers to become more acute."

Now this is a fact. Here is something that has *decisive* significance. That is why those who opposed the conclusion of peace were unwittingly playthings in the hands of the imperialists and fell into the trap laid for them by the imperialists. For, until the world socialist revolution breaks out, until it embraces several countries and is strong enough to overcome *international imperialism*, it is the direct duty of the socialists who have conquered in one country (especially a backward one) *not* to accept battle against the giants of imperialism. Their duty is to try to avoid battle, to

wait until the conflicts between the imperialists weaken them *even more*, and bring the revolution in other countries even nearer. Our "Lefts" did not understand this simple truth in January, February and March. Even now they are afraid of admitting it openly. But it comes to light through all their confused reasoning like "on the one hand it must be confessed, on the other hand one must admit".<sup>279</sup>

"During the coming spring and summer," the "Lefts" write in their theses, "the collapse of the imperialist system must begin. In the event of a victory for German imperialism in the present phase of the war this collapse can only be postponed, but it will then express itself in even more acute forms."

This formulation is even more childishly inaccurate despite its playing at science. It is natural for children to "understand" science to mean something that can determine in what year, spring, summer, autumn or winter the "collapse must begin".

These are ridiculous, vain attempts to ascertain what cannot be ascertained. No serious politician will ever say *when* this or that collapse of a "system" "must begin" (the more so that the collapse of the *system* has already begun, and it is now a question of the moment when the outbreak of revolution in *particular* countries will begin). But an indisputable truth forces its way through this childish helpless formulation, namely, the outbreaks of revolution in other, more advanced, countries are *nearer* now, a month since the beginning of the "respite" which followed the conclusion of peace, than they were a month or six weeks ago.

What follows?

It follows that the peace supporters were absolutely right, and their stand has been justified by the course of events. They were right in having drummed into the minds of the lovers of ostentation that one must be able to calculate the balance of forces and *not help* the imperialists by making the battle against socialism easier for them, when socialism is still weak, and when the chances of the battle are manifestly *against* socialism.

Our "Left" Communists, however, who are also fond of calling themselves "proletarian" Communists, because there is very little that is proletarian about them and very much that is petty-bourgeois, are incapable of giving thought to the balance of forces, to calculating it. This is the core of Marxism and Marxist tactics, but they disdainfully brush aside the "core" with "proud" phrases such as:

"...That the masses have become firmly imbued with an inactive 'peace mentality' is an objective fact of the political situation ..."

What a gem! After three years of the most agonising and reactionary war, the people, thanks to Soviet power and its correct tactics, which never lapsed into mere phrase-making, have obtained

a very, very brief, insecure and far from sufficient respite. The "Left" intellectual striplings, however, with the magnificence of a self-infatuated Narcissus, profoundly declare "that the masses [??] have become firmly imbued [!!] with an inactive [!!!??] peace mentality". Was I not right when I said at the Party Congress that the paper or journal of the "Lefts" ought to have been called not *Kommunist* but *Szlachcic*?

Can a Communist with the slightest understanding of the mentality and the conditions of life of the toiling and exploited people descend to the point of view of the typical declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual with the mental outlook of a noble or *szlachcic*, which declares that a "peace mentality" is "inactive" and believes that the brandishing of a cardboard sword is "activity"? For our "Lefts" merely brandish a cardboard sword when they ignore the universally known fact, of which the war in the Ukraine has served as an additional proof, that peoples utterly exhausted by three years of butchery cannot go on fighting without a respite: and that war, if it cannot be organised on a national scale, very often creates a mentality of disintegration peculiar to petty proprietors, instead of the iron discipline of the proletariat. Every page of *Kommunist* shows that our "Lefts" have no idea of iron proletarian discipline and how it is achieved, that they are thoroughly imbued with the mentality of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectual.

## II

Perhaps all these phrases of the "Lefts" about war can be put down to mere childish exuberance, which, moreover, concerns the past, and therefore has not a shadow of political significance.<sup>†</sup> This is the argument some people put up in defence of our "Lefts". But this is wrong. Anyone aspiring to political leadership must be able to *think out* political problems, and lack of this ability converts the "Lefts" into spineless preachers of a policy of vacillation, which objectively can have only one result, namely, by their vacillation the "Lefts" *are helping* the imperialists to provoke the Russian Soviet Republic into a battle that will obviously be to its disadvantage, they *are helping* the imperialists to draw us into a snare. Listen to this:

"... The Russian workers' revolution cannot 'save itself' by abandoning the path of world revolution, by continually avoiding battle and yielding to the pressure of international capital, by making concessions to 'home capital'.

"From this point of view it is necessary to adopt a determined class international policy which will unite international revolutionary propaganda by

---

<sup>†</sup> See p. 541 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

word and deed, and to strengthen the organic connection with international socialism (and not with the international bourgeoisie)...."

I shall deal separately with the thrusts at home policy contained in this passage. But examine this riot of phrase-making—and timidity in deeds—in the sphere of foreign policy. What tactics *are binding* at the *present* time on all who do not wish to be tools of imperialist provocation, and who do not wish to walk into the snare? Every politician must give a clear, straightforward reply to this question. Our Party's reply is well known. At the *present* moment we must *retreat* and avoid battle. Our "Lefts" dare not contradict this and shoot into the air: "A determined class international policy"!!

This is deceiving the people. If you want to fight now, say so openly. If you don't wish to *retreat* now, say so openly. Otherwise, in your objective role, you are a tool of imperialist provocation. And your subjective "mentality" is that of a frenzied petty bourgeois who swaggers and blusters but senses perfectly well that the proletarian is *right* in retreating and in trying to retreat in an organised way. He senses that the proletarian is right in arguing that because we lack strength we must retreat (before Western and Eastern imperialism) even as far as the Urals, for in this lies the *only* chance of playing for time while the revolution in the West matures, the revolution which is not "bound" (despite the twaddle of the "Lefts") to begin in "spring or summer", but which is coming nearer and becoming more probable *every month*.

The "Lefts" have no policy of their "own". They *dare not* declare that retreat at the *present moment* is unnecessary. They twist and turn, play with words, substitute the question of "continuously" avoiding battle for the question of avoiding battle at the *present moment*. They blow soap bubbles such as "international revolutionary propaganda by deed"!! What does this mean?

It can only mean one of two things: either it is mere Nozdryovism,<sup>240</sup> or it means an offensive war to overthrow international imperialism. Such nonsense cannot be uttered openly, and that is why the "Left" Communists are obliged to take refuge from the derision of every politically conscious proletarian behind high-sounding and empty phrases. They hope the inattentive reader will not notice the real meaning of the phrase "international revolutionary propaganda by deed".

The flaunting of high-sounding phrases is characteristic of the declassed petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The organised proletarian Communists will certainly punish this "habit" with nothing less than derision and expulsion from all responsible posts. The people must be told the bitter truth simply, clearly and in a straightforward manner: it is possible, and even probable, that the war party will again get the upper hand in Germany (that is, an offen-

sive against us will commence at once), and that Germany together with Japan, by official agreement or by tacit understanding, will partition and strangle us. Our tactics, if we do not want to listen to the ranters, must be to wait, procrastinate, avoid battle and retreat. If we shake off the ranters and "brace ourselves" by creating genuinely iron, genuinely proletarian, genuinely communist discipline, we shall have a good chance of gaining many months. And then by retreating even, if the worst comes to the worst, to the Urals, we shall *make it easier* for our ally (the international proletariat) to come to our aid, to "catch up" (to use the language of sport) the distance between the beginning of revolutionary outbreaks and revolution.

These, and these alone, are the tactics which can in fact strengthen the connection between one temporarily isolated section of international socialism and the other sections. But to tell the truth, all that your arguments lead to, dear "Left Communists", is the "strengthening of the organic connection" between one high-sounding phrase and another. A bad sort of "organic connection", this!

I shall enlighten you, my amiable friends, as to why such disaster overtook you. It is because you devote more effort to learning by heart and committing to memory revolutionary slogans than to thinking them out. This leads you to write "the defence of the socialist fatherland" in quotation marks, which are probably meant to signify your attempts at being ironical, but which really prove that you are muddleheads. You are accustomed to regard "defencism" as something base and despicable; you have learned this and committed it to memory. You have learned this by heart so thoroughly that some of you have begun talking nonsense to the effect that defence of the fatherland in an imperialist *epoch* is impermissible (as a matter of fact, it is impermissible only in an imperialist, reactionary war, waged by the bourgeoisie). But you have not thought out why and when "defencism" is abominable.

To recognise defence of the fatherland means recognising the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognise any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and "defencism" in *such* a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy".

We have been "defencists" since October 25, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this.



It is precisely in the interests of "strengthening the connection" with international socialism that we *are in duty bound* to defend our *socialist* fatherland. Those who treat frivolously the defence of the country in which the proletariat has already achieved victory are the ones who destroy the connection with international socialism. When we were the representatives of an oppressed class we did not adopt a frivolous attitude towards defence of the fatherland in an imperialist war. We opposed such defence on principle. Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organise socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a *serious* attitude towards defence of the country. And adopting a serious attitude towards defence of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defence is *retreat into the interior of the country* (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz, one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). The "Left Communists", however, do not give the slightest indication that they understand the significance of the question of the balance of forces.

When we were opposed to defensism on principle we were justified in holding up to ridicule those who wanted to "save" their fatherland, ostensibly in the interests of socialism. When we gained the right to be proletarian defencists the whole question was radically altered. It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved, to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or *until after* the moment) the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army.

### III

We shall pass on to the misfortunes of our "Left" Communists in the sphere of home policy. It is difficult to read the following phrases in the theses on the *present* situation without smiling.

"...The systematic use of the remaining means of production is conceivable only if a most determined policy of socialisation is pursued" ... "not to capit-

ulate to the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois intellectualist servitors, but to rout the bourgeoisie and to put down sabotage completely. . . ."

Dear "Left Communists", how determined they are, but how little thinking they display. What do they mean by pursuing "a most determined policy of socialisation"?

One may or may not be determined on the question of nationalisation or confiscation, but the whole point is that even the greatest possible "determination" in the world is not enough to pass *from* nationalisation and confiscation *to* socialisation. The misfortune of our "Lefts" is that by their raive, childish combination of the words "most determined policy of socialisation" they reveal their utter failure to understand the crux of the question, the crux of the "present" situation. The misfortune of our "Lefts" is that they have missed the very essence of the "present situation", the transition from confiscation (the carrying out of which requires above all determination in a politician) to socialisation (the carrying out of which requires a *different* quality in the revolutionary).

Yesterday, the main task of the moment was, as determinedly as possible, to nationalise, confiscate, beat down and crush the bourgeoisie, and put down sabotage. Today, only a blind man could fail to see that we have nationalised, confiscated, beaten down and put down more *than we have had time to count*. The difference between socialisation and simple confiscation is that confiscation can be carried out by "determination" alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, *whereas socialisation cannot be brought about without this ability*.

The historical service we have rendered is that yesterday we were determined (and we shall be tomorrow) in confiscating, in beating down the bourgeoisie, in putting down sabotage. To write about this today in "theses on the present situation" is to fix one's eyes on the past and to fail to understand the transition to the future.

"...To put down sabotage completely . . ." What a task they have found! Our saboteurs are quite sufficiently "put down". What we lack is something quite different. We lack the proper *calculation* of which saboteurs to set to work and where to place them. We lack the organisation of *our own* forces that is needed for, say, one Bolshevik leader or controller to be able to supervise a hundred saboteurs who are now coming into our service. When that is how matters stand, to flaunt such phrases as "a most determined policy of socialisation", "routing", and "completely putting down" is just missing the mark. It is typical of the petty-bourgeois revolutionary not to notice that routing, putting down, etc., is not enough for socialism. It is sufficient for a small proprietor

enraged against a big proprietor. But no proletarian revolutionary would ever fall into such error.

If the words we have quoted provoke a smile, the following discovery made by the "Left Communists" will provoke nothing short of Homeric laughter. According to them, under the "Bolshevik deviation to the right" the Soviet Republic is threatened with "evolution towards state capitalism". They have really frightened us this time! And with what gusto these "Left Communists" repeat this threatening revelation in their theses and articles. . . .

It has not occurred to them that state capitalism would be a *step forward* as compared with the present state of affairs in our Soviet Republic. If in approximately six months' time state capitalism became established in our Republic, this would be a great success and a sure guarantee that within a year socialism will have gained a permanently firm hold and will have become invincible in our country.

I can imagine with what noble indignation a "Left Communist" will recoil from these words, and what "devastating criticism" he will make to the workers against the "Bolshevik deviation to the right". What! Transition to state *capitalism* in the Soviet *Socialist* Republic would be a step forward? . . . Isn't this the betrayal of socialism?

Here we come to the root of the *economic* mistake of the "Left Communists". And that is why we must deal with this point in greater detail.

Firstly, the "Left Communists" do not understand what kind of *transition* it is from capitalism to socialism that gives us the right and the grounds to call our country the Socialist Republic of Soviets.

Secondly, they reveal their petty-bourgeois mentality precisely by *not recognising* the petty-bourgeois element as the *principal* enemy of socialism in our country.

Thirdly, in making a bugbear of "state capitalism", they betray their failure to understand that the Soviet state differs from the bourgeois state economically.

Let us examine these three points.

No one, I think, in studying the question of the economic system of Russia, has denied its transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognised as a socialist order.

But what does the word "transition" mean? Does it not mean, as applied to an economy, that the present system contains elements, particles, fragments of *both* capitalism and socialism?

Everyone will admit that it does. But not all who admit this take the trouble to consider what elements actually constitute the various socio-economic structures that exist in Russia at the present time. And this is the crux of the question.

Let us enumerate these elements:

- 1) patriarchal, i.e., to a considerable extent natural, peasant farming;
- 2) small commodity production (this includes the majority of those peasants who sell their grain);
- 3) private capitalism;
- 4) state capitalism;
- 5) socialism.

Russia is so vast and so varied that all these different types of socio-economic structures are intermingled. This is what constitutes the specific feature of the situation.

The question arises: what elements predominate? Clearly, in a small-peasant country, the petty-bourgeois element predominates and it must predominate, for the great majority of those working the land are small commodity producers. The shell of our state capitalism (grain monopoly, state-controlled entrepreneurs and traders, bourgeois co-operators) is pierced now in one place, now in another by *profiteers*, the chief object of profiteering being *grain*.

It is in this field that the main struggle is being waged. Between what elements is this struggle being waged if we are to speak in terms of economic categories such as "state capitalism"? Between the fourth and the fifth in the order in which I have just enumerated them? Of course not. It is not state capitalism that is at war with socialism, but the petty bourgeois plus private capitalism fighting together against both state capitalism and socialism. The petty bourgeoisie oppose *every* kind of state interference, accounting and control, whether it be state capitalist or state socialist. This is an absolutely unquestionable fact of reality, and the root of the economic mistake of the "Left Communists" is that they have failed to understand it. The profiteer, the commercial racketeer, the disrupter of monopoly—these are our principal "internal" enemies, the enemies of the economic measures of Soviet power. A hundred and twenty-five years ago it might have been excusable for the French petty bourgeoisie, the most ardent and sincere revolutionaries, to try to crush the profiteer by executing a few of the "chosen" and by making thunderous declamations. Today, however, the purely rhetorical attitude to this question assumed by some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries can rouse nothing but disgust and revulsion in every politically conscious revolutionary. We know perfectly well that the economic basis of profiteering is both the small proprietors, who are exceptionally

widespread in Russia, and private capitalism, of which *every* petty bourgeois is an agent. We know that the million tentacles of this petty-bourgeois hydra now and again encircle various sections of the workers, that, *instead of state monopoly*, profiteering forces its way into every pore of our social and economic organism.

Those who fail to see this show by their blindness that they are slaves of petty-bourgeois prejudices. This is precisely the case with our "Left Communists", who in words (and of course in their deepest convictions) are merciless enemies of the petty bourgeoisie, while in deeds they help only the petty bourgeoisie, serve only this section of the population and express only its point of view by fighting—in April 1918!!—against . . . "state capitalism". They are wide of the mark!

The petty bourgeoisie have money put away, the few thousand that they made during the war by "honest" and especially by dishonest means. They are the characteristic economic type that serves as the basis of profiteering and private capitalism. Money is a certificate entitling the possessor to receive social wealth; and a vast section of small proprietors, numbering millions, cling to this certificate and conceal it from the "state". They do not believe in socialism or communism, and "mark time" until the proletarian storm blows over. Either we subordinate the petty bourgeoisie to *our* control and accounting (we can do this if we organise the poor, that is, the majority of the population or semi-proletarians, around the politically conscious proletarian vanguard), or they will overthrow our workers' power as surely and as inevitably as the revolution was overthrown by the Napoleons and Cavaignacs who sprang from this very soil of petty proprietorship. This is how the question stands. Only the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries fail to see this plain and evident truth through their mist of empty phrases about the "toiling" peasants. But who takes these phrase-mongering Left Socialist-Revolutionaries seriously?

The petty bourgeois who hoards his thousands is an enemy of state capitalism. He wants to employ his thousands just for himself, against the poor, in opposition to any kind of state control. And the sum total of these thousands, amounting to many thousands of millions, forms the base for profiteering, which undermines our socialist construction. Let us assume that a certain number of workers produce in a few days values equal to 1,000. Let us then assume that 200 of this total vanishes owing to petty profiteering, various kinds of embezzlement and the "evasion" by the small proprietors of Soviet decrees and regulations. Every politically conscious worker will say that if better order and organisation could be obtained at the price of 300 out of the 1,000 he

would willingly give 300 instead of 200, for it will be quite easy under Soviet power to reduce this "tribute" later on to, say, 100 or 50, once order and organisation are established and once the petty-bourgeois disruption of state monopoly is completely overcome.

This simple illustration in figures, which I have deliberately simplified to the utmost in order to make it absolutely clear, explains the present *correlation* of state capitalism and socialism. The workers hold state power and have every legal opportunity of "taking" the whole thousand, without giving up a single kopek, except for socialist purposes. This legal opportunity, which rests upon the actual transition of power to the workers, is an element of socialism.

But in many ways, the small proprietary and private capitalist element undermines this legal position, drags in profiteering, hinders the execution of Soviet decrees. State capitalism would be a gigantic step forward *even if* we paid *more* than we are paying at present (I took a numerical example deliberately to bring this out more sharply), because it is worth while paying for "tuition", because it is useful for the workers, because victory over disorder, economic ruin and laxity is the most important thing; because the continuation of the anarchy of small ownership is the greatest, the most serious danger, and it will *certainly* be our ruin (unless we overcome it), whereas not only will the payment of a heavier tribute to state capitalism not ruin us, it will lead us to socialism by the surest road. When the working class has learned how to defend the state system against the anarchy of small ownership, when it has learned to organise large-scale production on a national scale, along state capitalist lines, it will hold, if I may use the expression, all the trump cards, and the consolidation of socialism will be assured.

In the first place, *economically*, state capitalism is immeasurably superior to our present economic system.

In the second place, there is nothing terrible in it for Soviet power, for the Soviet state is a state in which the power of the workers and the poor is assured. The "Left Communists" failed to understand these unquestionable truths, which, of course, a "Left Socialist-Revolutionary", who cannot connect any ideas on political economy in his head in general, will never understand but which every Marxist *must* admit. It is not even worth while arguing with a Left Socialist-Revolutionary. It is enough to point to him as a "repulsive example" of a windbag. But the "Left Communists" *must* be argued with because it is Marxists who are making a mistake, and an analysis of their mistake will help the *working class* to find the true road.

#### IV

To make things even clearer, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have "the last word" in modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, *subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Cross out the words in italics, and in place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist *state* put *also a state*, but of a different social type, of a different class content—a *Soviet* state, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the *sum total* of the conditions necessary for socialism.

Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the latest discoveries of modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organisation, which keeps tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a unified standard in production and distribution. We Marxists have always spoken of this, and it is not worth while wasting two seconds talking to people who do not understand *even* this (anarchists and a good half of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

At the same time socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is ABC. And history (which nobody, except Menshevik blockheads of the first order, ever expected to bring about "complete" socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) has taken such a peculiar course that it *has given birth* in 1918 to two unconnected halves of socialism existing side by side like two future chickens in the single shell of international imperialism. In 1918 Germany and Russia have become the most striking embodiment of the material realisation of the economic, the productive and the socio-economic conditions for socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

A successful proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily smash any shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of *any* . . . chicken) and would bring about the victory of world socialism for certain, without any difficulty, or with slight difficulty—if, of course, by "difficulty" we mean difficult on a world-historical scale, and not in the parochial philistine sense.

While the revolution in Germany is still slow in "coming forth", our task is to study the state capitalism of the Germans, to spare *no effort* in copying it and not shrink from adopting *dictatorial* methods to hasten the copying of it. Our task is to hasten this copying even more than Peter hastened the copying of Western culture by barbarian Russia, and we must not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism. If there are anarchists and Left

Socialist-Revolutionaries (I recall off-hand the speeches of Karelina and Ghe at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee) who indulge in Narcissus-like reflections and say that it is unbecoming for us revolutionaries to "take lessons" from German imperialism, there is only one thing we can say in reply: the revolution that took these people seriously would perish irrevocably (and deservedly).

At present, petty-bourgeois capitalism prevails in Russia, and it is *one and the same road* that leads from it to *both* large-scale state capitalism and to socialism, *through one and the same* intermediary station called "national accounting and control of production and distribution". Those who fail to understand this are committing an unpardonable mistake in economics. Either they do not know the facts of life, do not see what actually exists and are unable to look the truth in the face, or they confine themselves to abstractly comparing "capitalism" with "socialism" and fail to study the concrete forms and stages of the transition that is taking place in our country. Let it be said in parenthesis that this is the very theoretical mistake which misled the best people in the *Novaya Zhizn* and *Uperyod* camp. The worst and the mediocre of these, owing to their stupidity and spinelessness, tag along behind the bourgeoisie, of whom they stand in awe. The best of them have failed to understand that it was not without reason that the teachers of socialism spoke of a whole period of transition from capitalism to socialism and emphasised the "prolonged birth pangs" of the new society. And this new society is again an abstraction which can come into being only by passing through a series of varied, imperfect concrete attempts to create this or that socialist state.

It is because Russia cannot advance from the economic situation now existing here without traversing the ground which is *common* to state capitalism and to socialism (national accounting and control) that the attempt to frighten others as well as themselves with "evolution *towards* state capitalism" (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 8, col. 1) is utter theoretical nonsense. This is letting one's thoughts wander away from the true road of "evolution", and failing to understand what this road is. In practice, it is equivalent to pulling us back to small proprietary capitalism.

In order to convince the reader that this is not the first time I have given this "high" appreciation of state capitalism and that I gave it *before* the Bolsheviks seized power I take the liberty of quoting the following passage from my pamphlet *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written in September 1917.

"...Try to substitute *for* the Junker-capitalist state, for the landowner-capitalist state, a *revolutionary-democratic* state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way abolishes *all* privileges and



does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way. You will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state-monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, and more than one step, towards socialism!

"...For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly.

"...State-monopoly capitalism is a complete *material* preparation for socialism, the *threshold* of socialism, a rung on the ladder of history between which and the rung called socialism *there are no intermediate rungs*" (pp. 27 and 28)."

Please note that this was written when Kerensky was in power, that we are discussing *not* the dictatorship of the proletariat, *not* the socialist state, but the "revolutionary-democratic" state. Is it not clear that the *higher* we stand on this political ladder, *the more completely* we incorporate the socialist state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviets, *the less* ought we to fear "state capitalism"? Is it not clear that from the *material*, economic and productive point of view, we are not yet on "the threshold" of socialism? Is it not clear that we cannot pass through the door of socialism without crossing "the threshold" we have not yet reached?

From whatever side we approach the question, only one conclusion can be drawn: the argument of the "Left Communists" about the "state capitalism" which is alleged to be threatening us is an utter mistake in economics and is evident proof that they are complete slaves of petty-bourgeois ideology.

## V

The following is also extremely instructive.

When we argued with Comrade Bukharin in the Central Executive Committee,\*\* he declared, among other things, that on the question of high salaries for specialists "we" (evidently meaning the "Left Communists") were "more to the right than Lenin", for in this case "we" saw no deviation from principle, bearing in mind Marx's words that under certain conditions it is more expedient for the working class to "buy out the whole lot of them"<sup>281</sup> (namely, the whole lot of capitalists i.e., *to buy* from the bourgeoisie the land, factories, works and other means of production).

This extremely interesting statement shows, in the first place, that Bukharin is head and shoulders above the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists, that he is by no means hopelessly

\* See pp. 211, 212 of the present volume —Ed

\*\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 310-11 —Ed

stuck in the mud of phrase-making, but on the contrary is making efforts to think out the *concrete* difficulties of the transition—the painful and difficult transition—from capitalism to socialism.

In the second place, this statement makes Bukharin's mistake still more glaring.

Let us consider Marx's idea carefully.

Marx was talking about the Britain of the seventies of the last century, about the culminating point in the development of pre-monopoly capitalism. At that time Britain was a country in which militarism and bureaucracy were less pronounced than in any other, a country in which there was the greatest possibility of a "peaceful" victory for socialism in the sense of the workers "buying out" the bourgeoisie. And Marx said that under certain conditions the workers would certainly not refuse to buy out the bourgeoisie. Marx did not commit himself, or the future leaders of the socialist revolution, to matters of form, to ways and means of bringing about the revolution. He understood perfectly well that a vast number of new problems would arise, that the whole situation would change in the course of the revolution, and that the situation would change *radically* and *often* in the course of revolution.

Well, and what about Soviet Russia? Is it not clear that *after* the seizure of power by the proletariat and *after* the crushing of the exploiters' armed resistance and sabotage, *certain* conditions prevail which correspond to those which might have existed in Britain half a century ago had a peaceful transition to socialism begun there? The subordination of the capitalists to the workers in Britain would have been assured at that time owing to the following circumstances: (1) the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population owing to the absence of a peasantry (in Britain in the seventies there was hope of an extremely rapid spread of socialism among agricultural labourers); (2) the excellent organisation of the proletariat in trade unions (Britain was at that time the leading country in the world in this respect); (3) the comparatively high level of culture of the proletariat, which had been trained by centuries of development of political liberty; (4) the old habit of the well-organised British capitalists of settling political and economic questions by compromise—at that time the British capitalists were better organised than the capitalists of any country in the world (this superiority has now passed to Germany). These were the circumstances which at that time gave rise to the idea that the *peaceful* subjugation of the British capitalists by the workers was possible.

In our country, at the present time, this subjugation is assured by certain premises of fundamental significance (the victory in October and the suppression, from October to February, of the

capitalists' armed resistance and sabotage). But *instead* of the absolute preponderance of workers, of proletarians, in the population, and *instead* of a high degree of organisation among them, the important factor of victory in Russia was the support the proletarians received from the poor peasants and those who had experienced sudden ruin. Finally, we have neither a high degree of culture nor the habit of compromise. If these concrete conditions are carefully considered, it will become clear that we can and ought to employ two methods *simultaneously*. On the one hand we must ruthlessly suppress\* the uncultured capitalists who refuse to have anything to do with "state capitalism" or to consider any form of compromise, and who continue by means of profiteering, by bribing the poor peasants, etc., to hinder the realisation of the measures taken by the Soviets. On the other hand, we must use the *method of compromise*, or of buying off the cultured capitalists who agree to "state capitalism", who are capable of putting it into practice and who are useful to the proletariat as intelligent and experienced organisers of the *largest* types of enterprises, which actually supply products to tens of millions of people.

Bukharin is an extremely well-read Marxist economist. He therefore remembered that Marx was profoundly right when he taught the workers the importance of preserving the organisation of large-scale production, precisely for the purpose of facilitating the transition to socialism. Marx taught that (as an exception, and Britain was then an exception) the idea was conceivable of *paying the capitalists well*, of buying them off, *if* the circumstances were such as to compel the capitalists to submit peacefully and to come over to socialism in a cultured and organised fashion, provided they were paid.

But Bukharin went astray because he did not go deep enough into the specific features of the situation in Russia at the present time—an exceptional situation when we, the Russian proletariat, are in *advance* of any Britain or any Germany as regards our political order, as regards the strength of the workers' political power, but are *behind* the most backward West-European country as regards organising a good state capitalism, as regards our level of culture and the degree of material and productive preparedness

\* In this case also we must look truth in the face. We still have too little of that ruthlessness which is indispensable for the success of socialism, and we have too little not because we lack determination. We have sufficient determination. What we do lack is the ability to *catch* quickly enough a sufficient number of profiteers, racketeers and capitalists—the people who infringe the measures passed by the Soviets. The "ability" to do this can only be acquired by establishing accounting and control! Another thing is that the courts are not sufficiently firm. Instead of sentencing people who take bribes to be shot, they sentence them to six months' imprisonment. These two defects have the same social root: the influence of the petty-bourgeois element, its flabbiness.

for the "introduction" of socialism. Is it not clear that the specific nature of the present situation creates the need for a specific type of "buying out" which the workers must offer to the most cultured, the most skilled, the most capable organisers among the capitalists who are ready to enter the service of Soviet power and to help honestly in organising "state" production on the largest possible scale? Is it not clear that in this specific situation we must make every effort to avoid two mistakes, both of which are of a petty-bourgeois nature? On the one hand, it would be a fatal mistake to declare that since there is a discrepancy between our economic "forces" and our political strength, it "follows" that we should not have seized power. Such an argument can be advanced only by a "man in a muffler", who forgets that there will always be such a "discrepancy", that it always exists in the development of nature as well as in the development of society, that only by a series of attempts—each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies—will complete socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of *all* countries.

On the other hand, it would be an obvious mistake to give free rein to ranters and phrase-mongers who allow themselves to be carried away by the "dazzling" revolutionary spirit, but who are incapable of sustained, thoughtful and deliberate revolutionary work which takes into account the most difficult stages of transition.

Fortunately, the history of the development of the revolutionary parties and of the struggle that Bolshevism waged against them has left us a heritage of sharply defined types, of which the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and anarchists are striking examples of bad revolutionaries. They are now shouting hysterically, choking and shouting themselves hoarse, against the "compromise" of the "Right Bolsheviks". But they are incapable of thinking *what* is bad in "compromise", and *why* "compromise" has been justly condemned by history and the course of the revolution.

Compromise in Kerensky's time meant the surrender of power to the imperialist bourgeoisie, and the question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution. Compromise by a section of the Bolsheviks in October-November 1917 either meant that they feared the proletariat seizing power or wished to *share* power equally, not only with "unreliable fellow-travellers" like the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, but also with the enemies, with the Chernovists and the Mensheviks. The latter would inevitably have hindered us in fundamental matters, such as the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the ruthless suppression of the Bogavevskys, the universal setting up of the Soviet institutions, and in every act of confiscation.

Now power has been seized, retained and consolidated in the hands of a single party, the party of the proletariat, even without the "unreliable fellow-travellers". To speak of compromise at the present time when there is no question, and can be none, of sharing *power*, of renouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is merely to repeat, parrot-fashion, words which have been learned by heart but not understood. To describe as "compromise" the fact that, having arrived at a situation when we can and must rule the country, we try to win over to our side, not grudging the cost, the most skilled people capitalism has trained and to take them into our service against small proprietary disintegration, reveals a total incapacity to think out the economic tasks of socialist construction.

Therefore, while it is to Comrade Bukharin's credit that on the Central Executive Committee he "felt ashamed" of the "service" he had been rendered by Karelin and Ghe, nevertheless, as far as the "Left Communist" *trend* is concerned, the reference to their political comrades-in-arms still remains a serious warning.

Take, for example, *Znamya Truda*, the organ of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, of April 25, 1918, which proudly declares. "The present position of our party coincides with that of another trend in Bolshevism (Bukharin, Pokrovsky and others)". Or take the Menshevik *Uperyod* of the same date, which contains among other articles the following "thesis" by the notorious Menshevik Isuv:

"The policy of Soviet power, from the very outset devoid of a genuinely proletarian character, has lately pursued more and more openly a course of compromise with the bourgeoisie and has assumed an obviously anti-working-class character. On the pretext of nationalising industry, they are pursuing a policy of establishing industrial trusts, and on the pretext of restoring the productive forces of the country, they are attempting to abolish the eight-hour day, to introduce piece-work and the Taylor system, black lists and victimisation. This policy threatens to deprive the proletariat of its most important economic gains and to make it a victim of unrestricted exploitation by the bourgeoisie."

Isn't it marvellous?

Kerensky's friends, who, together with him, conducted an imperialist war for the sake of the secret treaties, which promised annexations to the Russian capitalists, the colleagues of Tsereteli, who, on June 11, threatened to disarm the workers, the Lieberdians, who screened the rule of the bourgeoisie with high-sounding phrases—these are the very people who accuse Soviet power of "compromising with the bourgeoisie", of "establishing trusts" (that is, of establishing "state capitalism"!), of introducing the Taylor system.

Indeed, the Bolsheviks ought to present Isuv with a medal, and his thesis ought to be exhibited in every workers' club and union

as an example of the *provocative speeches of the bourgeoisie*. The workers know these Lieberdants, Tseretelis and Isuvs very well now. They know them from experience, and it would be extremely useful indeed for the workers to think over the reason why *such lackeys of the bourgeoisie* should incite the workers to resist the Taylor system and the "establishment of trusts".

Class-conscious workers will carefully compare the "thesis" of Isuv, a friend of the Lieberdants and the Tseretelis, with the following thesis of the "Left Communists".

"The introduction of labour discipline in connection with the restoration of capitalist management of industry cannot considerably increase the productivity of labour, but it will diminish the class initiative, activity and organisation of the proletariat. It threatens to enslave the working class; it will rouse discontent among the backward elements as well as among the vanguard of the proletariat. In order to implement this system in the face of the hatred prevailing among the proletariat against the 'capitalist saboteurs', the Communist Party would have to rely on the petty bourgeoisie, as against the workers, and in this way would ruin itself as the party of the proletariat" (*Kommunist* No 1, p 8, col. 2).

This is most striking proof that the "Lefts" have fallen into the trap, have allowed themselves to be provoked by the Isuvs and the other Judases of capitalism. It serves as a good lesson for the workers, who know that it is precisely the vanguard of the proletariat which stands for the introduction of labour discipline, and that it is precisely the petty bourgeoisie which is doing its utmost to disrupt this discipline. Speeches such as the thesis of the "Lefts" quoted above are a terrible disgrace and imply the complete renunciation of communism in practice and complete desertion to the camp of the petty bourgeoisie.

"In connection with the restoration of capitalist management"—these are the words with which the "Left Communists" hope to "defend themselves". A perfectly useless defence, because, in the first place, when putting "management" in the hands of capitalists Soviet power appoints workers' Commissars or workers' committees who watch the manager's every step, who learn from his management experience and who not only have the right to appeal against his orders, but can secure his removal through the organs of Soviet power. In the second place, "management" is entrusted to capitalists only for executive functions while at work, the conditions of which are determined by the Soviet power, by which they may be abolished or revised. In the third place, "management" is entrusted by the Soviet power to capitalists not as capitalists, but as technicians or organisers for higher salaries. And the workers know very well that ninety-nine per cent of the organisers and first-class technicians of really large-scale and giant enterprises, trusts or other establishments belong to the capitalist class. But it is precisely these people whom we, the pro-

letarian party, must appoint to "manage" the labour process and the organisation of production, for there are *no* other people who have practical experience in this matter. The workers, having grown out of the infancy when they could have been misled by "Left" phrases or petty-bourgeois loose thinking, are advancing towards socialism precisely through the capitalist management of trusts, through gigantic machine industry, through enterprises which have a turnover of several millions per year—only through such a system of production and such enterprises. The workers are not petty bourgeois. They are not afraid of large-scale "state capitalism", they prize it as their *proletarian* weapon which *their* Soviet power will use against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation.

This is incomprehensible only to the declassed and consequently thoroughly petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, typified among the "Left Communists" by Osinsky, when he writes in his journal:

"...The whole initiative in the organisation and management of any enterprise will belong to the 'organisers of the trusts'. We are not going to *teach* them, or make rank-and-file workers out of them, we are going to *learn* from them" (*Kommunist* No. 1, p. 14, col. 2).

The attempted irony in this passage is aimed at my words "learn socialism from the organisers of the trusts".

Osinsky thinks this is funny. He wants to make "rank-and-file workers" out of the organisers of the trusts. If this had been written by a man of the age of which the poet wrote "But fifteen years, not more?..."<sup>282</sup> there would have been nothing surprising about it. But it is somewhat strange to hear such things from a Marxist who has learned that socialism is impossible unless it makes use of the achievements of the engineering and culture created by large-scale capitalism. There is no trace of Marxism in this.

No. Only those are worthy of the name of Communists who understand that it is *impossible* to create or introduce socialism *without learning* from the organisers of the trusts. For socialism is not a figment of the imagination, but the assimilation and application by the proletarian vanguard, which has seized power, of what has been created by the trusts. We, the party of the proletariat, have *no other way* of acquiring the ability to organise large-scale production on trust lines, as trusts are organised, except by acquiring it from first-class capitalist experts.

We have nothing to teach them, unless we undertake the childish task of "teaching" the bourgeois intelligentsia socialism. We must not teach them, but expropriate them (as is being done in Russia "determinedly" enough), *put a stop* to their sabotage, *subordinate* them as a section or group to Soviet power. We, on the other hand, if we are not Communists of infantile age and infan-

tile understanding, must learn from them, and there is something to learn, for the party of the proletariat and its vanguard have *no experience* of independent work in organising giant enterprises which serve the needs of scores of millions of people.

The best workers in Russia have realised this. They have begun to learn from the capitalist organisers, the managing engineers and the technicians. They have begun to learn steadily and cautiously with easy things, gradually passing on to the more difficult things. If things are going more slowly in the iron and steel and engineering industries, it is because they present greater difficulties. But the textile and tobacco workers and tanners are not afraid of "state capitalism" or of "learning from the organisers of the trusts", as the declassed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia are. These workers in the central leading institutions like Chief Leather Committee and Central Textile Committee take their place by the side of the capitalists, *learn from them*, establish trusts, establish "state capitalism", which under Soviet power represents the threshold of socialism, the condition of its firm victory.

This work of the advanced workers of Russia, together with their work of introducing labour discipline, has begun and is proceeding quietly, unobtrusively, without the noise and fuss so necessary to some "Lefts". It is proceeding very cautiously and gradually, taking into account the lessons of practical experience. This hard work, the work of *learning* practically how to build up large-scale production, is the guarantee that we are on the right road, the guarantee that the class-conscious workers in Russia are carrying on the struggle against small proprietary disintegration and disorganisation, against petty-bourgeois indiscipline\*—the guarantee of the victory of communism.

## VI

Two remarks in conclusion.

In arguing with the "Left Communists" on April 4, 1918 (see *Kommunist* No. 1, p. 4, footnote), I put it to them bluntly: "Explain what you are dissatisfied with in the railway decree; submit *your* amendments to it. It is your duty as Soviet leaders of the pro-

\* It is extremely characteristic that the authors of the theses do not say a single word about the significance of the *dictatorship* of the proletariat in the *economic* sphere. They talk only of the "organisation" and so on. But that is accepted also by the petty bourgeoisie, who shun *dictatorship* by the workers in economic relations. A proletarian revolutionary could never at such a moment "forget" this core of the proletarian revolution, which is directed against the economic foundations of capitalism.



letariat to do so, otherwise what you say is nothing but empty phrases."

The first issue of *Kommunist* appeared on April 20, 1918, but did not contain a *single word* about how, according to the "Left Communists", the railway decree should be altered or amended.

The "Left Communists" stand condemned by their own silence. They did nothing but *attack* the railway decree with all sorts of insinuations (pp. 8 and 16 of No. 1), they *gave no* articulate answer to the question, "How should the decree be amended if it is wrong?"

No comment is needed. The class-conscious workers will call *such* "criticism" of the railway decree (which is a typical example of our line of action, the line of firmness, the line of dictatorship, the line of proletarian discipline) either "Isvian" criticism or empty phrase-making.

Second remark. The first issue of *Kommunist* contained a very flattering review by Comrade Bukharin of my pamphlet *The State and Revolution*. But however much I value the opinion of people like Bukharin, my conscience compels me to say that the *character* of the review reveals a sad and significant fact. Bukharin regards the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship from the point of view of the *past* and not of the future. Bukharin noted and emphasised what the proletarian revolutionary and the petty-bourgeois revolutionary may have in common on the question of the state. But Bukharin "overlooked" the very thing that distinguishes the one from the other.

Bukharin noted and emphasised that the old state machinery must be "smashed" and "blown up", that the bourgeoisie must be "finally and completely strangled" and so on. The frenzied petty bourgeoisie may also want this. And this, in the main, is what our revolution has *already* done between October 1917 and February 1918.

In my pamphlet I also mention what even the most revolutionary petty bourgeois cannot want, what the class-conscious proletarian does want, what our revolution has *not yet* accomplished. On this task, the task of tomorrow, Bukharin said nothing.

And I have all the more reason not to be silent on this point, because, in the first place, a Communist is expected to devote greater attention to the tasks of tomorrow, and not of yesterday, and, in the second place, my pamphlet was written *before* the Bolsheviks seized power, when it was impossible to treat the Bolsheviks to vulgar petty-bourgeois arguments such as: "Yes, of *course*, *after* seizing power, you begin to talk about discipline."

"... Socialism will develop into communism... since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without violence and without subordination." (*The*

*State and Revolution*, pp. 77-78\*; thus, "elementary conditions" were discussed *before* the seizure of power.)

"... Only then will democracy begin to wither away..." when "people gradually become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims; they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without the special apparatus for coercion called the state" (*ibid.*, p. 84\*\*); thus mention was made of "copy-book maxims" *before* the seizure of power.

"... The higher phase of the development of communism" (from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs) "... presupposes not the present productivity of labour and not the present ordinary run of people, who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's stories, are capable of damaging the stocks of public wealth just for fun, and of demanding the impossible" (*ibid.*, p. 91).\*\*\*

"Until the higher phase of communism arrives, the socialists demand the strictest control by society and by the state over the measure of labour and the measure of consumption..." (*ibid.*).

"Accounting and control—that is mainly what is needed for the smooth working, for the proper functioning of the first phase of communist society" (*ibid.*, p. 95).\*\*\* And this control must be established not only over "the insignificant capitalist minority, over the gentry who wish to preserve their capitalist habits", but also over the workers who "have been thoroughly corrupted by capitalism" (*ibid.*, p. 96)\*\*\* and over the "parasites, the sons of the wealthy, the swindlers and other guardians of capitalist traditions" (*ibid.*).

It is significant that Bukharin did *not* emphasise *this*.

May 5, 1918

Published May 9 10 and 11, 1918  
in *Pravda* Nos. 88 89 and 90  
Signed *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works* Vol. 27,  
pp. 123 54

See pp. 297-98 of the present volume — *Ed*

*Ibid.*, p. 303 — *Ed.*

*Ibid.*, p. 309 — *Ed*

*Ibid.*, pp. 309, 312 — *Ed*

*Ibid.*, p. 312 — *Ed*

---

## THESES ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

### I

The extreme instability of the international situation of the Soviet Republic, surrounded as it is by imperialist powers, has been frequently pointed out in the Bolshevik press and has been admitted in the resolutions of the higher organs of Soviet power.

During the past few days, i.e., the first ten days of May 1918, the political situation has become extremely critical owing to both external and internal causes:

First, the direct offensive of the counter-revolutionary forces (Semyonov and others) with the aid of the Japanese in the Far East has been stepped up, and in connection with it there are a number of signs indicating the possibility of the entire anti-German imperialist coalition coming to an agreement on the presentation of an ultimatum to Russia—either fight against Germany, or there will be a Japanese invasion aided by us.

Secondly, since Brest the war party has gained the upper hand in German politics in general, and this party could now, at any moment, gain the upper hand on the question of an immediate general offensive against Russia i.e., it could completely overcome the other policy of German bourgeois-imperialist circles that strive for fresh annexations in Russia but for the time being want peace with her and not a general offensive against her.

Thirdly, the restoration of bourgeois-landowner monarchism in the Ukraine with the support of the Constitutional-Democratic and Octobrist elements of the bourgeoisie of all Russia and with the aid of the German troops was bound to make the struggle against the counter-revolution in Russia more intense, was bound to encourage the plans and raise the spirit of our counter-revolutionaries.

Fourthly, the disorganised food situation has become extremely acute and in many places has led to real hunger both because we were cut off from Rostov-on-Don and because of the efforts

of the petty bourgeoisie and the capitalists in general to sabotage the grain monopoly, accompanied by insufficiently firm, disciplined and ruthless opposition on the part of the ruling class, i.e., the proletariat, to those strivings, efforts and attempts.

## II

The foreign policy of Soviet power must not be changed in any way. Our military preparations are not yet complete, and our general slogan, therefore, will remain as before—manoeuvre, withdraw, bide our time, and continue our preparations with all our might.

Although we do not in general reject military agreements with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other in those cases in which such an agreement could, without undermining the basis of Soviet power, strengthen its position and paralyse the attacks of any imperialist power, we cannot at the present moment enter into a military agreement with the Anglo-French coalition. For them, the importance of such an agreement would be the diversion of German troops from the West, i.e., by means of the advance of many Japanese army corps into the interior of European Russia, which is an unacceptable condition since it would mean the complete collapse of Soviet power. If the Anglo-French coalition were to present us with an ultimatum of this kind we should reject it, because the danger of the Japanese advance can more easily be paralysed (or can be delayed for a longer time) than the threat of the Germans occupying Petrograd, Moscow and a large part of European Russia.

## III

In considering the tasks of the foreign policy of Soviet power at the present moment, the greatest caution, discretion and restraint must be observed in order not to help the extreme elements in the war parties of Japan and Germany by any ill-considered or hasty step.

The fact of the matter is that the extreme elements in the war parties of both these countries favour an immediate general offensive against Russia for the purpose of occupying all her territory and overthrowing Soviet power. At any moment these extreme elements may gain the upper hand.

On the other hand, however, it is an undoubted fact that the majority of the imperialist bourgeoisie in Germany are against such a policy and at the present moment prefer the annexationist

peace with Russia to a continuation of the war for the simple reason that war would divert forces from the West and increase the instability of the internal situation in Germany that is already making itself felt; it would also make it difficult to obtain raw materials from places involved in insurrection or that are suffering from damage to railways, from failure to plant sufficient crops, etc., etc.

The Japanese urge to attack Russia is being held back, first, by the danger of the movement and of revolts in China, and secondly, there is a certain antagonism on the part of America, the latter fearing the strengthening of Japan and hoping to obtain raw materials from Russia more easily under peaceful conditions.

It goes without saying that it is quite possible for the extreme elements of the war parties in both Germany and Japan to gain the upper hand at any moment. There can be no guarantee against this until the revolution breaks out in Germany. The American bourgeoisie may plot together with the Japanese bourgeoisie, or the Japanese with the German. It is, therefore, our imperative duty to make the most energetic preparations for war.

As long as there remains even a slight chance of preserving peace or of concluding peace with Finland, the Ukraine and Turkey, at the cost of certain new annexations or losses, we must not take a single step that might aid the extreme elements in the war parties of the imperialist powers.

#### IV

The primary task in undertaking more energetic military training, as in the question of combating famine, is that of organisation.

There cannot be any really serious preparation for war unless the food difficulties are overcome, unless the population is properly supplied with bread, unless the strictest order is introduced on the railways, unless truly iron discipline is established among the masses of the working people (and not only at the top). It is in this field that we are most backward.

Guiltiest of all of a complete lack of understanding of this truth are the Left Socialist-Revolutionary and anarchist elements with their screaming about "insurrectionary committees" and their howls of "to arms", etc. Such screams and howls are the quintessence of stupidity and are nothing but pitiful, despicable and disgusting phrase-making; it is ridiculous to talk about "insurrection" and "insurrectionary committees" when Soviet central power is doing its utmost to persuade the people to start military training and arm themselves, when we have more weapons than we can count and distribute, when it is precisely the

economic ruin and the lack of discipline that prevent us from using the weapons available and compel us to lose valuable time that could be used for training.

Intensified military training for a serious war cannot be done by means of a sudden impulse, a battle-cry, a militant slogan; it requires lengthy, intense, persistent and disciplined work on a mass scale. We must deal ruthlessly with the Left Socialist-Revolutionary and anarchist elements that do not wish to understand this, and must not give them an opportunity to infect certain elements of our proletarian Communist Party with their hysteria.

## V

It is essential to wage a ruthless struggle against the bourgeoisie, which on account of the above circumstances has raised its head during the past few days, and to declare a state of emergency, close newspapers, arrest the leaders and so on. These measures are as necessary as the military campaign against the rural bourgeoisie, who are holding back grain surpluses and infringing the grain monopoly. There will be no salvation either from the counter-revolution or from famine without iron discipline on the part of the proletariat.

In particular it must be borne in mind that during the past few days the bourgeoisie have been making extremely skilful and cunning use of panic-spreading as a weapon against proletarian power. Some of our comrades, especially those who are less resolute in their attitude to the Left Socialist-Revolutionary and anarchist revolutionary phrases, have allowed themselves to be diverted, have got into a panic or have failed to observe the line that divides legitimate and necessary warning of the coming danger from the spreading of panic.

The basic specific features of the entire present economic and political situation in Russia must be kept firmly in mind; because of these features our cause cannot be helped by outbursts. We must become firmly convinced ourselves and try to convince all workers of the truth that only restraint and patient creative work to establish iron proletarian discipline, including ruthless measures against hooligans, kulaks and disorganising elements, can protect Soviet power at this moment, one of the most difficult and dangerous periods of transition, unavoidable owing to the delay of the revolution in the West.

---

## ON THE FAMINE

A LETTER TO THE WORKERS OF PETROGRAD

Comrades, the other day your delegate, a Party comrade, a worker in the Putilov Works, called on me. This comrade drew a detailed and extremely harrowing picture of the famine in Petrograd. We all know that the food situation is just as acute in many of the industrial gubernias, that famine is knocking just as cruelly at the door of the workers and the poor generally.

And side by side with this we observe an orgy of profiteering in grain and other food products. The famine is not due to the fact that there is no grain in Russia, but to the fact that the bourgeoisie and the rich generally are putting up a last decisive fight against the rule of the toilers, against the state of the workers, against Soviet power, on this most important and acute of issues, the issue of bread. The bourgeoisie and the rich generally, including the rural rich, the kulaks, are thwarting the grain monopoly; they are disrupting the distribution of grain undertaken by the state for the purpose and in the interests of supplying bread to the whole of the population, and in the first place to the workers, the toilers, the needy. The bourgeoisie are disrupting the fixed prices, they are profiteering in grain, they are making a hundred, two hundred and more rubles' profit on every pood of grain; they are disrupting the grain monopoly and the proper distribution of grain by resorting to bribery and corruption and by deliberately supporting everything tending to destroy the power of the workers, which is endeavouring to put into effect the prime, basic and root principle of socialism: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat."

"He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—every toiler understands that. Every worker, every poor and even middle peasant, everybody who has suffered need in his lifetime, everybody who has ever lived by his own labour, is in agreement with this. Nine-tenths of the population of Russia are in agreement

with this truth. In this simple, elementary and perfectly obvious truth lies the basis of socialism, the indefeasible source of its strength, the indestructible pledge of its final victory.

But the whole point is that it is one thing to subscribe to this truth, to swear one's allegiance to it, to give it verbal recognition, but it is quite different to be able to put it into effect. When hundreds of thousands and millions of people are suffering the pangs of hunger (in Petrograd, in the non-agricultural gubernias, and in Moscow) in a country where millions upon millions of poods of grain are being concealed by the rich, the kulaks, and the profiteers—in a country which calls itself a socialist Soviet Republic—there is something to which every conscious worker and peasant must give serious and profound thought.

"He who does not work, neither shall he eat"—how is this to be put into effect? It is as clear as daylight that in order to put it into effect we require, first, a state grain monopoly, i.e., the absolute prohibition of all private trade in grain, the compulsory delivery of all surplus grain to the state at a fixed price, the absolute prohibition of all hoarding and concealment of surplus grain, no matter by whom. Secondly, we require the strictest registration of all grain surpluses, faultless organisation of the transportation of grain from places of abundance to places of shortage, and the building up of reserves for consumption, for processing, and for seed. Thirdly, we require a just and proper distribution of bread, controlled by the workers' state, the proletarian state, among all the citizens of the state, a distribution which will permit of no privileges and advantages for the rich.

One has only to reflect ever so slightly on these conditions for coping with the famine to see the abysmal stupidity of the contemptible anarchist windbags, who deny the necessity of a state power (and, what is more, a power ruthless in its severity towards the bourgeoisie and ruthlessly firm towards disorganisers of government) for the transition from capitalism to communism and for the ridding of the working people of all forms of oppression and exploitation. It is at this moment, when our revolution has directly, concretely, and practically approached the tasks involved in the realisation of socialism—and therein lies its inestimable merit—it is at this moment, and exactly in connection with this most important of issues, the issue of bread, that the need becomes absolutely clear for an iron revolutionary rule, for a dictatorship of the proletariat, for the organisation of the collection of food products, their transportation, and distribution on a mass, national scale, taking into account the requirements of tens and hundreds of millions of people, calculating the conditions and the results of production for a year and many years ahead (for there are sometimes years of crop failure,



sometimes land improvements essential for increasing grain crops require years of work, and so forth).

Romanov and Kerensky left to the working class a country utterly impoverished by their predatory, criminal, and most terrible war, a country picked clean by Russian and foreign imperialists. Bread will suffice for all only if we keep the strictest account of every pood, only if every pound is distributed absolutely evenly. There is also an acute shortage of bread for machines, i.e., fuel; the railways and factories will come to a standstill, unemployment and famine will bring ruin on the whole nation, if we do not bend every effort to establish a strict and ruthless economy of consumption and proper distribution. We are faced by disaster, it is very near. An intolerably difficult May will be followed by a still more difficult June, July and August.

Our state grain monopoly exists in law, but in practice it is being thwarted at every step by the bourgeoisie. The rural rich, the kulak, the parasite who has been robbing the whole neighbourhood for decades, prefers to enrich himself by profiteering and illicit distilling: it is so good for his pocket, and he can throw the blame for the famine on Soviet power. That, too, is the line of the political defenders of the kulak—the Constitutional-Democrats, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Mensheviks—who are overtly and covertly “working” against the grain monopoly and against Soviet power. The party of the spineless, i.e., the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, are displaying their spinelessness here too: they are yielding to the covetous howls and outcries of the bourgeoisie, they are crying out against the grain monopoly, they are “protesting” against the food dictatorship, they are allowing themselves to be intimidated by the bourgeoisie, they are afraid to fight the kulak, and are flapping about hysterically, recommending that the fixed prices be raised, that private trading be permitted, and so forth.

This party of the spineless reflects in politics something akin to what takes place in ordinary life when the kulak incites the poor peasants against the Soviets, bribes them by, say, letting some poor peasant have a pood of grain not for six, but for three rubles, so that the poor peasant, thus corrupted, may himself “make a bit” by profiteering, may “turn a penny” by selling that pood of grain at a profiteering price of one hundred and fifty rubles, and himself become a decrier of the Soviets, which have prohibited private trading in grain.

Anyone who is capable of reflecting, anyone who is willing to reflect ever so little, will see clearly what line this fight has taken.

Either the advanced and class-conscious workers triumph and unite the poor peasant masses around themselves, establish

rigorous order, a mercilessly severe rule, a genuine dictatorship of the proletariat—either they compel the kulak to submit, and institute a proper distribution of food and fuel on a national scale;

—or the bourgeoisie, with the help of the kulaks, and with the indirect support of the spineless and muddle-headed (the anarchists and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries), will overthrow Soviet power and set up a Russo-German or a Russo-Japanese Kornilov, who will present the people with a sixteen-hour working day, an ounce of bread per week, mass shooting of workers and torture in dungeons, as has been the case in Finland and the Ukraine.

Either—or.

There is no middle course.

The situation of the country is desperate in the extreme.

Anyone who reflects upon political life cannot fail to see that the Constitutional-Democrats, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, and the Mensheviks are coming to an understanding about who would be “pleasanter”, a Russo-German or a Russo-Japanese Kornilov, about who would crush the revolution more effectively and reliably, a crowned or a republican Kornilov.

It is time all class-conscious and advanced workers came to an understanding. It is time they bestirred themselves and realised that every minute’s delay may spell ruin to the country and ruin to the revolution.

Half-measures will be of no avail. Complaining will lead us nowhere. Attempts to secure bread or fuel “in retail fashion”, “each man for himself”, i.e., for “our” factory, “our” workshop, are only increasing the disorganisation and facilitating for the profiteers their selfish, filthy, and blackguardly work.

That is why, comrades, workers of Petrograd, I have taken the liberty of addressing this letter to you. Petrograd is not Russia. The Petrograd workers are only a small part of the workers of Russia. But they are one of the best, the advanced, most class-conscious, most revolutionary, most steadfast detachments of the working class and of all the working people of Russia, and one of the least liable to succumb to empty phrases, to spineless despair and to the intimidation of the bourgeoisie. And it has frequently happened at critical moments in the life of nations that even small advanced detachments of advanced classes have carried the rest with them, have fired the masses with revolutionary enthusiasm, and have accomplished tremendous historical feats.

“There were forty thousand of us at the Putilov Works,” the delegate from the Petrograd workers said to me. “But the majority of them were ‘temporary’ workers, not proletarians, an un-

reliable, flabby lot. Now there are fifteen thousand left, but these are proletarians, tried and steeled in the fight."

That is the sort of vanguard of the revolution—in Petrograd and throughout the country—that must sound the call, must *rise together*, must understand that the salvation of the country is in their hands, that from them is demanded a heroism no less than that which they displayed in January and October 1905 and in February and October 1917, that a great "*crusade*" must be organised against the grain profiteers, the kulaks, the parasites, the disorganisers and bribe-takers, a great "*crusade*" against the violators of strictest state order in the collection, transportation, and distribution of bread for the people and bread for the machines.

The country and the revolution can be saved only by the mass effort of the advanced workers. We need tens of thousands of advanced and steeled proletarians, class-conscious enough to explain matters to the millions of poor peasants all over the country and to assume the leadership of these millions, resolute enough to ruthlessly cast out of their midst and shoot all who allow themselves to be "tempted"—as indeed happens—by the temptations of profiteering and turn from fighters for the cause of the people into robbers; we need proletarians steadfast enough and devoted enough to the revolution to bear in an organised way all the hardships of the *crusade* and take it to every corner of the country for the establishment of order, for the consolidation of the local organs of Soviet power, and for the exercise of control in the localities over every pood of grain and every pood of fuel.

It is rather more difficult to do this than to display heroism for a few days without leaving one's accustomed place, without joining in a crusade, confining oneself to an impulsive uprising against the idiot monster Romanov or the fool and braggart Kerensky. Heroism displayed in prolonged and persevering organisational work on a national scale is immensely more difficult than, but at the same time immensely superior to, heroism displayed in an uprising. But the strength of working-class parties, the strength of the working class has always been that it looks danger boldly, squarely and openly in the face, that it does not fear to admit danger and soberly weighs the forces in "our" camp and in "the other" camp, the camp of the exploiters. The revolution is progressing, developing, and growing. The tasks we face are also growing. The struggle is broadening and deepening. Proper distribution of bread and fuel, their procurement in greater quantities and the very strict account and control of them by *the workers* on a national scale—that is the real and chief prelude to socialism. That is no longer a "general

revolutionary" task but a *communist* task, a task which requires that the working people and the poor engage capitalism in a decisive battle.

And this battle is worth giving all one's strength to it; the difficulties are great, but so is the cause of the abolition of oppression and exploitation for which we are fighting.

When the people are starving, when unemployment is becoming ever more terrible, anyone who conceals an extra pood of grain, anyone who deprives the state of a pood of fuel is an out-and-out criminal.

At such a time—and for a genuinely communist society, it is always true—every pood of grain and fuel is veritably sacred, much more so than the sacred things which priests use to confuse the minds of fools, promising them the kingdom of heaven as a reward for slavery on earth. And in order to rid this genuinely sacred thing of every remnant of the "sacredness" of the priests, we must *take possession of it practically*, we must achieve its proper distribution *in practice*, we must collect the whole of it without exception; every particle of surplus grain must be brought into the state stores, *the whole country must be swept clean* of concealed or ungarnered grain surpluses; we need the firm hand of the worker to harness every effort to increase the output of fuel and to secure the greatest economy of fuel, the greatest efficiency in its transportation and consumption.

We need a mass "crusade" of the advanced workers to every centre of production of grain and fuel, to every important centre of supply and distribution—a mass "crusade" to increase the intensity of work tenfold, to assist the local organs of Soviet power in the matter of accounting and control, and to eradicate profiteering, graft, and slovenliness by armed force. This is not a new task. History, properly speaking, is not advancing new tasks—all it is doing is to increase the size and scope of old tasks as the scope of the revolution, its difficulties, and the greatness of its world-historic aim increase.

One of the greatest and indefeasible accomplishments of the October Revolution—the Soviet revolution—is that the advanced worker, *as the leader* of the poor, *as the leader* of the toiling masses of the countryside, *as the builder of the state of the toilers*, has "gone among the people". Petrograd and other proletarian centres have given thousands upon thousands of their best workers to the countryside. The detachments of fighters against the Kaledins and Dutovs, and the food detachments, are nothing new. Only the proximity of disaster, the acuteness of the situation compel us to do *ten times more* than before.

When the worker became the vanguard leader of the poor he did not thereby become a saint. He led the people forward, but

he also became infected with the diseases of petty-bourgeois disintegration. The fewer the detachments of best organised, of most class-conscious, and most disciplined and steadfast workers were, the more frequently did these detachments degenerate, the more frequently did the small-proprietor instincts of the past triumph over the proletarian-communist consciousness of the future.

Having begun the communist revolution, the working class cannot instantly discard the weaknesses and vices inherited from the society of landowners and capitalists, the society of exploiters and parasites, the society based on the filthy selfishness and personal gain of a few and the poverty of the many. But the working class can vanquish the old world—*and in the end will certainly and inevitably vanquish it*—with its vices and weaknesses, if against the enemy are brought ever greater detachments of workers, ever more enlightened by experience and tempered by the hardships of the struggle.

Such and only such is the state of affairs in Russia today. Single-handed and disunited, we shall not be able to cope with famine and unemployment. We need a mass “crusade” of advanced workers to every corner of this vast country. We need ten times more *iron detachments* of the proletariat, class-conscious and boundlessly devoted to communism. Then we shall triumph over famine and unemployment. Then we shall make the revolution the real prelude to socialism, and then, too, we shall be in a position to conduct a victorious war of defence against the imperialist vultures.

*N. Lenin*

May 22, 1918

---

## SPEECH AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF ECONOMIC COUNCILS MAY 26, 1918

Comrades, permit me first of all to greet the Congress of Economic Councils in the name of the Council of People's Commissars: (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the Supreme Economic Council now has a difficult, but a most rewarding task. There is not the slightest doubt that the further the gains of the October Revolution go, the more profound the upheaval it started becomes, the more firmly the socialist revolution's gains become established and the socialist system becomes consolidated, the greater and higher will become the role of the Economic Councils, which alone of all the state institutions are to endure. And their position will become all the more durable the closer we approach the establishment of the socialist system and the less need there will be for a purely administrative apparatus, for an apparatus which is solely engaged in administration. After the resistance of the exploiters has been finally broken, after the working people have learned to organise socialist production, this apparatus of administration in the proper, strict, narrow sense of the word, this apparatus of the old state, is doomed to die; while the apparatus of the type of the Supreme Economic Council is destined to grow, to develop and become strong, performing all the main activities of organised society.

That is why, comrades, when I look at the experience of our Supreme Economic Council and of the local councils, with the activities of which it is closely and inseparably connected, I think that, in spite of much that is unfinished, incomplete and unorganised, we have not even the slightest grounds for pessimistic conclusions. For the task which the Supreme Economic Council sets itself, and the task which all the regional and local councils set themselves, is so enormous, so all-embracing, that there is absolutely nothing that gives rise to alarm in what we

all observe. Very often—of course, from our point of view, perhaps too often—the proverb “measure thrice and cut once” has not been applied. Unfortunately, things are not so simple in regard to the organisation of the economy on socialist lines as they are expressed in that proverb.

With the transition of all power—this time not only political and not even mainly political, but economic power, that is, power that affects the deepest foundations of everyday human existence—to a new class, and, moreover, to a class which for the first time in the history of humanity is the leader of the overwhelming majority of the population, of the whole mass of the working and exploited people—our tasks become more complicated.

It goes without saying that in view of the supreme importance and the supreme difficulty of the organisational tasks that confront us, when we must organise the deepest foundations of the existence of hundreds of millions of people on entirely new lines, it is impossible to arrange matters as simply as in the proverb “measure thrice and cut once”. We, indeed, are not in a position to measure a thing innumerable times and then cut out and fix what has been finally measured and fitted. We must build our economic edifice as we go along, trying out various institutions, watching their work, testing them by the collective common experience of the working people, and, above all, by the results of their work. We must do this as we go along, and, moreover, in a situation of desperate struggle and frenzied resistance by the exploiters, whose frenzy grows the nearer we come to the time when we can pull out the last bad teeth of capitalist exploitation. It is understandable that if even within a brief period we have to alter the types, the regulations and the bodies of administration in various branches of the national economy several times, there are not the slightest grounds for pessimism in these conditions, although, of course, this gives considerable grounds for malicious outbursts on the part of the bourgeoisie and the exploiters, whose best feelings are hurt. Of course, those who take too close and too direct a part in this work, say, the Chief Water Board, do not always find it pleasant to alter the regulations, the norms and the laws of administration three times; the pleasure obtained from work of this kind cannot be great. But if we abstract ourselves somewhat from the direct unpleasantness of extremely frequent alteration of decrees, and if we look a little deeper and further into the enormous world-historic task that the Russian proletariat has to carry out with the aid of its own still inadequate forces, it will become immediately understandable that even far more numerous alterations and testing in practice of various systems of administra-

tion and various forms of discipline are inevitable; that in such a gigantic task, we could never claim, and no sensible socialist who has ever written on the prospects of the future ever even thought, that we could immediately establish and compose the forms of organisation of the new society according to some pre-determined instruction and at one stroke.

All that we knew, all that the best experts on capitalist society, the greatest minds who foresaw its development, exactly indicated to us was that transformation was historically inevitable and must proceed along a certain main line, that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history, that it would burst, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated. This was established with scientific precision, and we knew this when we grasped the banner of socialism, when we declared ourselves socialists, when we founded socialist parties, when we transformed society. We knew this when we took power for the purpose of proceeding with socialist reorganisation; but we could not know the forms of transformation, or the rate of development of the concrete reorganisation. Collective experience, the experience of millions can alone give us decisive guidance in this respect, precisely because, for our task, for the task of building socialism, the experience of the hundreds and hundreds of thousands of those upper sections which have made history up to now in feudal society and in capitalist society is insufficient. We cannot proceed in this way precisely because we rely on joint experience, on the experience of millions of working people.

We know, therefore, that organisation, which is the main and fundamental task of the Soviets, will inevitably entail a vast number of experiments, a vast number of steps, a vast number of alterations, a vast number of difficulties, particularly in regard to the question of how to fit every person into his proper place, because we have no experience of this; here we have to devise every step ourselves, and the more serious the mistakes we make on this path, the more the certainty will grow that with every increase in the membership of the trade unions, with every additional thousand, with every additional hundred thousand that come over from the camp of working people, of exploited, who have hitherto lived according to tradition and habit, into the camp of the builders of Soviet organisations, the number of people who should prove suitable and organise the work on proper lines is increasing.

Take one of the secondary tasks that the Economic Council—the Supreme Economic Council—comes up against with particular frequency, the task of utilising bourgeois experts. We all know, at least those who take their stand on the basis of science



and socialism, that this task can be fulfilled only when—that this task can be fulfilled only to the extent that international capitalism has developed the material and technical prerequisites of labour, organised on an enormous scale and based on science, and hence on the training of an enormous number of scientifically educated specialists. We know that without this socialism is impossible. If we reread the works of those socialists who have observed the development of capitalism during the last half-century, and who have again and again come to the conclusion that socialism is inevitable, we shall find that all of them without exception have pointed out that socialism alone will liberate science from its bourgeois fetters, from its enslavement to capital, from its slavery to the interests of dirty capitalist greed. Socialism alone will make possible the wide expansion of social production and distribution on scientific lines and their actual subordination to the aim of easing the lives of the working people and of improving their welfare as much as possible. Socialism alone can achieve this. And we know that it must achieve this, and in the understanding of this truth lies the whole complexity and the whole strength of Marxism.

We must achieve this while relying on elements which are opposed to it, because the bigger capital becomes the more the bourgeoisie suppresses the workers. Now that power is in the hands of the proletariat and the poor peasants and the government is setting itself tasks with the support of the people, we have to achieve these socialist changes with the help of bourgeois experts who have been trained in bourgeois society, who know no other conditions, who cannot conceive of any other social system. Hence, even in cases when these experts are absolutely sincere and loyal to their work they are filled with thousands of bourgeois prejudices, they are connected by thousands of ties, imperceptible to themselves, with bourgeois society, which is dying and decaying and is therefore putting up furious resistance.

We cannot conceal these difficulties of endeavour and achievement from ourselves. Of all the socialists who have written about this, I cannot recall the work of a single socialist or the opinion of a single prominent socialist on future socialist society, which pointed to this concrete, practical difficulty that would confront the working class when it took power, when it set itself the task of turning the sum total of the very rich, historically inevitable and necessary for us store of culture and knowledge and technique accumulated by capitalism from an instrument of capitalism into an instrument of socialism. It is easy to do this in a general formula, in abstract reasoning, but in the struggle against capitalism, which does not die at once but puts up increasingly furious resistance the closer death approaches, this task is one

that calls for tremendous effort. If experiments take place in this field, if we make repeated corrections of partial mistakes, this is inevitable because we cannot, in this or that sphere of the national economy, immediately turn specialists from servants of capitalism into servants of the working people, into their advisers. If we cannot do this at once it should not give rise to the slightest pessimism, because the task which we set ourselves is a task of world-historic difficulty and significance. We do not shut our eyes to the fact that in a single country, even if it were a much less backward country than Russia, even if we were living in better conditions than those prevailing after four years of unprecedented, painful, severe and ruinous war, we could not carry out the socialist revolution completely, solely by our own efforts. He who turns away from the socialist revolution now taking place in Russia and points to the obvious disproportion of forces is like the conservative "man in a muffler" who cannot see further than his nose, who forgets that not a single historical change of any importance takes place without there being several instances of a disproportion of forces. Forces grow in the process of the struggle, as the revolution grows. When a country has taken the path of profound change, it is to the credit of that country and the party of the working class which achieved victory in that country, that they should take up in a practical manner the tasks that were formerly raised abstractly, theoretically. This experience will never be forgotten. The experience which the workers now united in trade unions and local organisations are acquiring in the practical work of organising the whole of production on a national scale cannot be taken away, no matter how difficult the vicissitudes the Russian revolution and the international socialist revolution may pass through. It has gone down in history as socialism's gain, and on it the future world revolution will erect its socialist edifice.

Permit me to mention another problem, perhaps the most difficult problem, for which the Supreme Economic Council has to find a practical solution. This is the problem of labour discipline. Strictly speaking, in mentioning this problem, we ought to admit and emphasise with satisfaction that it was precisely the trade unions, their largest organisations, namely, the Central Committee of the Metalworkers' Union and the All-Russia Trade Union Council, the supreme trade union organisations uniting millions of working people, that were the first to set to work independently to solve this problem and this problem is of world-historic importance. In order to understand it we must abstract ourselves from those partial, minor failures, from the incredible difficulties which, if taken separately, seem to be insurmountable. We must rise to a higher level and survey the historical

change of systems of social economy. Only from this angle will it be possible to appreciate the immensity of the task which we have undertaken. Only then will it be possible to appreciate the enormous significance of the fact that on this occasion, the most advanced representatives of society, the working and exploited people, are, on their own initiative, taking on themselves the task which hitherto, in feudal Russia, up to 1861, was solved by a handful of landed proprietors, who regarded it as their own affair. At that time it was their affair to bring about state integration and discipline.

We know how the feudal landowners created this discipline. It was oppression, humiliation and the incredible torments of penal servitude for the majority of the people. Recall the whole of this transition from serfdom to the bourgeois economy. From all that you have witnessed—although the majority of you could not have witnessed it—and from all that you have learned from the older generations, you know how easy, historically, seemed the transition to the new bourgeois economy after 1861, the transition from the old feudal discipline of the stick, from the discipline of the most senseless, arrogant and brutal humiliation and personal violence, to bourgeois discipline, to the discipline of starvation, to so-called free hire, which in fact was the discipline of capitalist slavery. This was because mankind passed from one exploiter to another; because one minority of plunderers and exploiters of the people's labour gave way to another minority, who were also plunderers and exploiters of the people's labour; because the feudal landowners gave way to the capitalists, one minority gave way to another minority, while the toiling and exploited classes remained oppressed. And even this change from one exploiter's discipline to another exploiter's discipline took years, if not decades, of effort; it extended over a transition period of years, if not decades. During this period the old feudal landowners quite sincerely believed that everything was going to rack and ruin, that it was impossible to manage the country without serfdom; while the new, capitalist boss encountered practical difficulties at every step and gave up his enterprise as a bad job. The material evidence, one of the substantial proofs of the difficulty of this transition was that Russia at that time imported machinery from abroad, in order to have the best machinery to use, and it turned out that no one was available to handle this machinery, and there were no managers. And all over Russia one could see excellent machinery lying around unused, so difficult was the transition from the old feudal discipline to the new, bourgeois, capitalist discipline.

And so, comrades, if you look at the matter from this angle, you will not allow yourselves to be misled by those people, by

those classes, by those bourgeoisie and their hangers-on whose sole task is to sow panic, to sow despondency, to cause complete despondency concerning the whole of our work, to make it appear to be hopeless, who point to every single case of indiscipline and corruption, and for that reason give up the revolution as a bad job, as if there has ever been in the world, in history, a single really great revolution in which there was no corruption, no loss of discipline, no painful experimental steps, when the people were creating a new discipline. We must not forget that this is the first time that this preliminary stage in history has been reached, when a new discipline, labour discipline, the discipline of comradely contact, Soviet discipline, is being created in fact by millions of working and exploited people. We do not claim, nor do we expect, quick successes in this field. We know that this task will take an entire historical epoch. We have begun this historical epoch, an epoch in which we are breaking up the discipline of capitalist society in a country which is still bourgeois, and we are proud that all politically conscious workers, absolutely all the toiling peasants are everywhere helping this destruction; an epoch in which the people voluntarily, on their own initiative, are becoming aware that they must—not on instructions from above, but on the instructions of their own living experience—change this discipline based on the exploitation and slavery of the working people into the new discipline of united labour, the discipline of the united, organised workers and working peasants of the whole of Russia, of a country with a population of tens and hundreds of millions. This is a task of enormous difficulty, but it is also a thankful one, because only when we solve it in practice shall we have driven the last nail into the coffin of capitalist society which we are burying. (*Applause.*)

Newspaper reports published  
in *Petrogradskaya Pravda* No 108  
(evening issue), May 27, 1918,  
*Pravda* No. 104 and *Izvestia UTsIK*  
No 106, May 28, 1918

Published in full in  
1918 in the book *Proceedings*  
*of the First All-Russian Congress*  
*of Economic Councils. Verbatim*  
*Report*, Russian edition, Moscow

*Collected Works* Vol 27,  
pp 408 15

---

## COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT “REGULATIONS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NATIONALISED ENTERPRISES”

Communism requires and presupposes the greatest possible centralisation of large-scale production throughout the country. The all-Russia centre, therefore, should definitely be given the right of direct control over all the enterprises of the given branch of industry. The regional centres define their functions depending on local conditions of life, etc., in accordance with the general production directions and decisions of the centre

To deprive the all-Russia centre of the right of direct control over all the enterprises of the given industry throughout the country, as follows from the commission's draft, would be regional anarcho-syndicalism, and not communism

Written June 2 1918

First published in 1959  
in *Lenin Miscellany XXXVI*

*Collected Works* Vol. 42,  
p. 46

---

# **FIFTH ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS OF SOVIETS OF WORKERS', PEASANTS', SOLDIERS' AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES<sup>283</sup>**

**JULY 4-10, 1918**

## **REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS JULY 5**

Comrades, permit me, even though the previous speaker was at times extremely excited,<sup>284</sup> to submit my report on behalf of the Council of People's Commissars in the usual way, that is, to deal with the main questions of principle in order of merit, and not enter into the argument which the previous speaker would so much like to have, and which, of course, I have no intention of declining altogether. You know that since the last Congress, the chief factor which has determined our position, changed our policy and shaped our tactics and attitude towards certain other parties in Russia has been the Brest Treaty. You will recall how many reproaches were hurled at us at the last Congress, how many accusations were levelled at us, and how many voices were raised declaring that this famous respite would not help Russia, that in any case an international imperialist alliance had been concluded, and that in practice the retreat we were advocating would lead nowhere. This basic factor determined the whole position of the capitalist states, too, and we must naturally dwell on it. I think that the past three and a half months have made it absolutely indisputable that despite all reproaches and accusations we were right. We may say that the proletariat and the peasantry, who do not exploit others, do not make profits out of the people's hunger, are entirely and unreservedly on our side, and at any rate are against those unwise people who would embroil them in war, who are against the Brest Treaty. (*Commotion.*)

Nine-tenths of the people are on our side, and the clearer the situation becomes, the more certain it is that now, when the West-European imperialist parties, the two chief imperialist groups, are locked in a life-and-death struggle, when with every month, every week, every day they are pushing each other nearer and nearer to the abyss whose outlines we can clearly perceive, at such a time it is clearer than ever to us that our tactics were right. That is

best felt and realised by those who have been through the war, who have seen what war means and do not talk about it in airy terms. To us it is perfectly clear that as long as each of these groups is stronger than we are, and as long as that radical change which will permit the workers, and the working people of Russia in general, to enjoy the fruits of the revolution, to recover from the blow that has been dealt them and to rise to their full stature, so as to create a new, organised and disciplined army on new lines, in order that we may, not merely in words, but in deeds . . . (*loud applause on the Left. Voice from the Right: "Kerensky!"*), as long as that radical change has not come, we have to wait. Therefore, the deeper we go down among the masses of the people, and the nearer we get to the workers of the mills and factories and to the working peasants, who do not exploit hired labour, do not defend the profiteering interests of the kulak, who conceals his grain and fears the food dictatorship, the more surely may we say that there too we shall meet and are meeting—in fact we may say with absolute conviction that we have already met—with full sympathy and unanimous accord. Yes, it is a fact that at present the people do not want to fight, cannot fight, and will not fight these enemies—the imperialists—however much some may try, in their ignorance or infatuation with phrases, to drive them into this war, and no matter what catchwords they may use as a camouflage. No, comrades, anyone who now calls for war directly or indirectly, in open or veiled form, anyone who howls about the Brest Peace Treaty being a noose, fails to see that it is Kerensky and the land-owners, capitalists and kulaks who are putting a noose around the necks of the workers and peasants of Russia. . . . (*Voice: "Mirbach!" Commotion.*) Let them scream, as they do at every meeting; among the people their cause is hopeless! (*Applause and commotion.*)

I am not a bit surprised that, in view of the predicament these people are in, the only way they can answer is by shouts, hysterical outcries, abuse and wild behaviour (*applause*), when they have no other arguments. . . . (*Voice: "We have arguments!" Commotion.*)

Ninety-nine out of every hundred Russian soldiers know what incredible suffering it cost to get the mastery of this war. They know that in order to put war on a new socialist and economic basis (*cries of "Mirbach won't let you!"*), tremendous effort will be required, and first of all we had to put an end to the war of plunder. Knowing that the frenzied forces of imperialism are continuing to fight, and that in the three months which have elapsed since the last Congress they have moved several steps nearer to the abyss, they will not join in this war. After we had performed our duty to all the nations, realising the value of a declaration of peace and bringing its value home to the workers of all countries

through our Brest delegation, headed by Comrade Trotsky, when we openly proposed an honest democratic peace, this proposal was frustrated by the frenzied bourgeoisie of all countries. Our position cannot be any other but to wait, and the people will yet see these frenzied imperialist cliques, strong though they still are today, tumble into the abyss which they are now approaching, as everybody can see. . . . (*Applause.*) Everybody can see that who does not deliberately close his eyes. In these three and a half months, during which the frenzied imperialist party has been doing its best to drag out the war, this abyss has undoubtedly drawn nearer. We know, feel and realise that we are not yet ready for war; that is what the soldiers, the men under arms, who know what war means in practice, are saying. And as for the cries that we should throw off the Brest noose at once, they come from the Mensheviks, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the followers of Kerensky, the Constitutional-Democrats. You know where the followers of the landowners and the capitalists, where the hangers-on of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Constitutional-Democrats still stand. In that camp, the speeches of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who also incline towards war, will be greeted with loud applause. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, as the previous speakers have said, find themselves in an awkward predicament: they have landed in the wrong box. (*Applause.*)

We know that great revolutions arise from the very depths of the people, that this takes months and years, and we are not surprised that in the course of the revolution the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party has shown such incredible vacillations. Trotsky has told us about these vacillations here, and it only remains for me to add that on October 26, when we invited the Left Socialist-Revolutionary comrades to join the government, they refused, and when Krasnov was at the gates of Petrograd, they were not with us, with the consequent result that they helped not us, but Krasnov. We are not surprised at these vacillations. Yes, this party has been through a great deal. But, comrades, there is a limit to everything.

We know that revolution is a thing that is learned by experience and practice, that a revolution becomes a real revolution only when tens of millions of people rise up with one accord, as one man. (*Lenin's words are drowned by applause. Cries of "Long live the Soviets!"*) This struggle, which is raising us to a new life, has been begun by one hundred and fifteen million people: this great struggle must be examined with the utmost attention. (*Loud applause.*) In October, when the Soviet regime was founded, on October 26, 1917, when. . . (*commotion, shouts and applause*) our party and its representatives on the Central Executive Committee invited the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party to join the govern-



ment, it refused. When the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries refused to join our government they were not with us, but against us. (*Commotion on the Left Socialist-Revolutionary benches.*) I am very sorry to have to say things you do not like. (*The commotion on the Right becomes louder.*) But what's to be done? If Krasnov, the Cossack general. . . . (*The commotion and outcries prevent Lenin from continuing.*) When, on October 26, you vacillated, not knowing yourselves what you wanted, and refused to join us. . . . (*Commotion lasting several minutes.*) The truth is hard to swallow! Let me remind you that those who vacillated, who do not know themselves what they want and refuse to join us, willingly listen to the fables of others. I have told you that the soldier who has been in the war. . . . (*Commotion and applause.*) When the previous speaker had the floor the vast majority of the delegates did not interrupt her. Well, it is only to be expected. If these people prefer to withdraw from the Congress, well, then, good riddance! (*Commotion and excitement on the Right benches. The Chairman calls to order.*)

And so, comrades, the whole course of events has shown that we were right in concluding the Brest peace. And those who tried at the last Congress of Soviets to crack feeble jokes about the respite have seen and learnt that we have secured a breathing-space; true, it cost us incredible effort, but during this breathing-space our workers and peasants have taken a tremendous step forward to socialist construction, while the Western powers, on the contrary, have taken a tremendous step towards that abyss for which imperialism is heading faster and faster with every week of this war.

And so the only way I can explain the conduct of those who denounce our tactics because of the difficulty of our situation is that they are completely bewildered. I repeat that one only has to recall the past three and a half months. I would remind those who were at the last Congress of some of the things that were said there, and would recommend those who were not to read the minutes or the newspaper reports of that Congress, which will convince them that events have fully corroborated our tactics. There can be no boundary line between the victories of the October Revolution and the victories of the international socialist revolution; outbursts are bound to begin in other countries. And in order to hasten them we did all we could in the Brest period. Those who have been through the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, those who have pondered over them and examined them thoughtfully and seriously, will know that these revolutions in our country were engendered with incredible difficulty.

Two months before January 1905 or February 1917 no revolutionary, whatever his experience and knowledge, however familiar

he was with the life of the people, could have foreseen that Russia would be shaken by such explosions. To fasten on individual cries and launch appeals to the masses which are tantamount to terminating the peace and plunging us into war is the policy of people who are utterly bewildered and have lost their heads completely. And to prove that this is so, I will cite the words of a person whose sincerity neither I nor anybody else will question—the words of Comrade Spiridonova, from the speech which was published in *Golos Trudovogo Krest'yanstva*,<sup>285</sup> and which has not been repudiated. In this speech of June 30, Comrade Spiridonova inserted three totally irrelevant lines to the effect that the Germans had presented us with an ultimatum to deliver to them 2,000 million rubles' worth of textiles.

A party which drives its most sincere representatives into such an awful quagmire of lies and deceit, such a party is absolutely doomed. The workers and peasants cannot help knowing what tremendous effort and anguish it cost us to sign the Brest Treaty. Surely, it is not necessary to exaggerate the hardships of that peace by the kind of fables and fabrications to which even the sincerest members of that party resort. But we know that truth is with the people, and we are guided by it, while this party writhes in hysterics. From that standpoint, conduct inspired by such utter bewilderment is worse than any provocation. Especially if we compare all the parties of Russia as a whole, as a scientific attitude towards the revolution requires. One must never neglect to examine the relations of all the parties as a whole. Individual persons or groups may be mistaken, may be baffled, may not be able to explain their own conduct; but if we take all the parties of Russia as a whole and examine their mutual relations, there can be no mistake. Just see what the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kerensky, Savinkov and the rest, are saying now, when they hear the appeals of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. . . . Why, they applaud like mad. They would be glad to embroil Russia in a war just now, when it would suit Milyukov's purpose. And to talk like that, to talk now about the Brest peace being a noose, is to cast the landowner's noose around the neck of the Russian peasant. When they talk here about fighting the Bolsheviks, like the previous speaker, who spoke about a quarrel with the Bolsheviks, my reply is: no, comrades, this is no quarrel, but a genuine and irrevocable rupture, a rupture between those who are bearing the whole onus of the situation by telling the people the truth, and not allowing themselves to be intoxicated by outcries, and those who are intoxicating themselves with such outcries and involuntarily doing the work of the enemy, the work of provocateurs. (*Applause.*)

I will now conclude the first part of my report. During these three and a half months of frantic imperialist war, the imperialist

states have drawn nearer to the abyss into which they are driving the people. This wounded beast has torn many a lump of flesh from our living organism. Our enemies are nearing this abyss so fast that even if they had more than three and a half months at their disposal, and even if the imperialist carnage were again to inflict just as heavy losses on us, it is they who would perish, not we; for the rapidity with which their power of resistance is diminishing is drawing them rapidly nearer to the abyss. We, on the other hand, in spite of the tremendous difficulties, which we do not conceal from the people, after these three and a half months have many a healthy shoot of a healthy organism to show; both in industry and everywhere else, small-scale constructive work is going on, unpretentious and unsensational though it may be. It has already yielded very fruitful results, and, given another three months, six months, a whole winter season of such work, we shall march forward, while the West-European imperialist beast, worn out by the struggle, will be unable to stand such a contest, because within it forces are maturing which, although they have no faith in themselves as yet, will lead imperialism to its doom. And what has already been begun there, and begun radically and fundamentally, is not likely to be changed in three and a half months. Far too little is being said about this constructive, small-scale, creative work, and it seems to me that we should talk about it more. I, for my part, cannot pass over this fact in silence, if only because the attacks of the previous speaker must be taken into account. I would mention the resolution of the Central Executive Committee of April 29, 1918.\* At the time I made a speech in which I spoke of the immediate tasks of the Soviet government,\*\* and I pointed out that notwithstanding the incredible difficulties of our position prime attention at home must be given to constructive work.

And here we must cherish no illusions, and must say that to this work, difficult though it may be we must devote all our efforts. Our experience, which I can tell you about, shows that in this respect we have undoubtedly made big strides. To be sure, if one looks only for outward results, as the bourgeoisie do, seizing on our individual mistakes, one can scarcely speak of success; but we look at it from a totally different angle. The bourgeoisie picks on the administration of the river fleet, for example, and points out how often we have set about reconstructing it and proclaims with malicious glee that the Soviet government cannot cope with the job. To which I reply that it is true that we have time and again reconstructed the administration of our river fleet, as we have

\* See pp. 620-22 of the present volume — *Ed.*

\*\* See *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 281-305 — *Ed.*

the administration of the railways, and now are about to undertake an even bigger reorganisation of the Economic Council. That is the whole meaning of the revolution, namely, that socialism has passed from the sphere of a dogma, which can be discussed only by people who understand nothing at all, from the sphere of book knowledge, of a programme, to the sphere of practical work. And today the workers and peasants are making socialism with their own hands.

The times have passed, and in Russia, I am sure, have passed beyond recall, when we used to argue about the socialist programme on the basis of book knowledge. Today socialism can be discussed only on the basis of experience. The whole meaning of the revolution lies in the fact that it has for the first time in history discarded the old apparatus of bourgeois officialdom, the bourgeois system of administration, and has created conditions which enable the workers and peasants themselves to set about this job, a job of incredible difficulty, whose difficulties it would be absurd to conceal from ourselves; for the capitalists and landowners have for centuries been hounding and persecuting tens of millions of people even for harbouring the thought of administering the land. Now, in the space of a few weeks, a few months, in the midst of desperate and frightful disruption, when the whole body of Russia has been bruised and battered by the war, so that the people are like a man who has been thrashed within an inch of his life—at such a time, when the tsars, the landowners and the capitalists have left us with a country in a state of utter disruption, the new job, the new work of building must be shouldered by the new classes, by the workers and those peasants who do not exploit hired workers and do not profiteer in grain. Yes, this is an extremely difficult task, but an extremely rewarding one. Every month of such work and such experience is worth ten, if not twenty, years of our history. Yes, we are not afraid to confess what an acquaintance with our decrees will show, namely, that we have constantly to alter them; we have not yet produced anything finished and complete, we do not yet know a socialism that can be embodied in clauses and paragraphs. If we are now able to submit a Soviet Constitution to this Congress, it is only because Soviets have been set up and tested in all parts of the country, because you yourselves have created that Constitution and tested it in all parts of the country; only six months after the October Revolution, and nearly a year after the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, are we able to write down what already exists in practice.<sup>286</sup>

In the economic sphere, where we are only just beginning to build socialism, and where a new discipline must be built up, we have no such experience—we are acquiring it by dint of altera-

tion and reconstruction. That is our prime task. We say that every new social order demands new relations between man and man, a new discipline. There was a time when economic life was impossible without feudal discipline, when there was only one kind of discipline—the discipline of the lash; and there was a time of the rule of the capitalists, when the disciplinary force was starvation. But now, with the Soviet revolution, with the beginning of the socialist revolution, discipline must be built on entirely new principles; it must be a discipline of faith in the organising power of the workers and poor peasants, a discipline of comradeship, a discipline of the utmost mutual respect, a discipline of independence and initiative in the struggle. Anyone who resorts to the old capitalist methods, anyone who at a time of famine and want argues in the old, capitalist way—if I sell grain on my own, I shall make a bigger profit; if I set out on my own to get grain, I shall get it easier—anyone who argues in that way may be choosing the easier road, but he will never arrive at socialism.

It is simple and easy to keep within the old realm of customary capitalist relations; but we want to take a new road. It is one which demands of us and of all the people a high level of political consciousness and organisation; it demands more time and involves graver mistakes. But we say that only those who attempt nothing practical make no mistakes.

If, in the opinion of the meeting, the period under review includes experiments in which one frequently meets with changes, amendments, reversions to the old, that is not the chief thing, the chief meaning and value of this period. The old government apparatus of bureaucrats, for whom it was enough to order an increase of salary, is a thing of the past. We have now to deal with workers' organisations which are taking economic administration into their own hands. We have to deal with the railway workers, who used to be worse off than others, and who have a legitimate right to demand an improvement of conditions. Tomorrow the river transport workers will submit their demands, and the day after, the middle peasants—I shall speak of them at greater length—who often feel they are worse off than the worker, whom we treat with the utmost attention, and to whose interest all our decrees are devoted—a thing the previous speaker has absolutely failed to grasp. All this creates enormous difficulties, but they are difficulties which are due to the fact that the workers and poor peasants for the first time in centuries are themselves, with their own hands, organising the whole economic life of Russia. And so, we have to find means of satisfying just demands; we have to alter decrees and reconstruct the system of administration. Side by side with cases of mistakes and failures—cases which the bourgeois press seizes upon and which, of course, are numerous—we achieve

successes, we learn by these partial mistakes and failures, we learn by experience how to build the edifice of socialism. And when we are showered with new demands from all sides, we say: that is as it should be, that is just what socialism means, when each wants to improve his condition and all want to enjoy the benefits of life. But the country is poor, the country is poverty-stricken, and it is impossible just now to satisfy all demands; that is why it is so difficult to build the new edifice in the midst of disruption. But those who believe that socialism can be built at a time of peace and tranquillity are profoundly mistaken: it will everywhere be built at a time of disruption, at a time of famine. That is how it must be. And when we see before us people with real ideas, we say: all the thousands, tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of workers and working peasants have set about building the new, socialist edifice with their own hands. A profound revolution is now beginning in the countryside, where the kulaks are agitating and trying to interfere with the working peasants who do not exploit the labour of others or profiteer in grain, and there the task is different. In the towns the thing is to organise the factories, the metal industry; and what with the havoc of the war, to distribute production, to distribute raw materials and other materials is a very difficult task.

There the workers are learning to do this and are forming central organs of administration; there we have to reconstruct the Supreme Economic Council; for the old laws, passed at the beginning of the year, are already out of date, the workers' movement is marching ahead, the old workers' control is already antiquated, and the trade unions are becoming the embryos of administrative bodies for all industry. (*Applause.*) In this sphere quite a lot has already been done, but still we cannot boast of any brilliant successes. We know that in this sphere the bourgeois elements, the capitalists, landowners and kulaks will for a long time yet have the opportunity to carry on their propaganda and say that, as usual, a decree has been passed but is not being enforced, another has only just been passed, yet after three months it is already being altered, while profiteering is going on just the same as under capitalism. Yes, it is true that we do not know of any universal quack panacea for putting an end to profiteering at one stroke. The habits of the capitalist system are too strong; to re-educate the people who have been brought up to these habits for centuries is no easy matter and will take a long time. But we say that our fighting weapon is organisation. We must organise everything, take everything into our own hands, keep a check on the kulaks and profiteers at every step, declare implacable war on them and never allow them to breathe freely, controlling their every move.

We know from experience that alterations of decrees are un-

avoidable, for new difficulties are encountered which are a source of fresh changes. And if in the matter of food supply we have now arrived at the point of organising the poor peasants, and if our former comrades, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, say in all sincerity—which cannot be doubted—that our ways have parted, our firm reply to them is: all the worse for you, for that means that you have turned your back on socialism. (*Applause.*)

Comrades! The food question is the main question, it is the one to which we are devoting most attention in our policy-making. A host of small measures which are imperceptible to the outsider, but which the Council of People's Commissars has adopted—such as the steps to improve the water and rail transport systems, the clearing up of the war commissariat stores, the fight against profiteering—were all directed towards putting food supply on a proper footing. Not only our country, but even the most civilised countries, which never knew what famine meant before the war, are now all in a state of utmost distress, created by the imperialists in their struggle for the supremacy of one group or another. In the West, tens of millions of people are suffering the torments of starvation. It is this that makes social revolution inevitable, for social revolution stems not from programmes but from the fact that tens of millions of people say: "Rather than live and starve, we prefer to die for the revolution." (*Applause.*)

A terrible disaster—famine—has befallen us, and the more difficult our situation, the more acute the food crisis, the more the capitalists intensify their struggle against Soviet power. You know that the Czechoslovak mutiny<sup>287</sup> is a mutiny of men who have been bought by the British and French imperialists. We are constantly hearing of revolts against the Soviets in one place or another. The kulak risings are spreading from region to region. In the Don region, there is Krasnov, whom the Russian workers magnanimously allowed to go free in Petrograd when he came and surrendered his sword, for the prejudices of the intellectual are still strong and the intellectuals protested against capital punishment—Krasnov was allowed to go free because of the intellectual's prejudice against capital punishment. But I would like to see the people's court today, the workers' or peasants' court, which would not sentence Krasnov, who is shooting workers and peasants, to be shot. We are told that when people are sentenced to be shot by Dzerzhinsky's commission<sup>288</sup> it is all right, but if a court were to declare publicly and openly that a man was a counter-revolutionary and deserved to be shot, that would be wrong. People who have sunk to such depths of hypocrisy are political corpses. (*Applause.*) No, a revolutionary who does not want to be a hypocrite cannot renounce capital punishment. There has never been a revolution or a period of civil war without shootings.

Our food supply has been reduced to an almost catastrophic state. We have reached the direst period in our revolution. We are facing the most distressful period of all—there never has been a more difficult period in workers' and peasants' Russia—the period that remains until the harvest. I have seen plenty of party differences and revolutionary disputes in my day, and I am not surprised to find that in such a time of stress an increasing number of people are giving way to hysterics and crying: "I will resign from the Soviets," and talking of the decrees abolishing capital punishment. But he is a poor revolutionary who at a time of acute struggle is halted by the immutability of a law. In a period of transition laws have only a temporary validity; and when a law hinders the development of the revolution, it must be abolished or amended. Comrades, the worse the famine becomes, the clearer it becomes that this desperate calamity must be combated by equally desperate measures.

Socialism, I repeat, has ceased to be a dogma, just as it has perhaps ceased to be a programme. Our Party has not yet drawn up a new programme, but the old one is already worthless. (*Applause.*) The proper and equitable distribution of bread—that is what constitutes the basis of socialism today. (*Applause.*) The war has bequeathed to us a legacy of economic disruption; the efforts of Kerensky and the landowners and kulaks saying, "After us the deluge", have reduced the country to such a state that they say, "The worse it gets, the better." The war has bequeathed us such hardships that in this matter of the food supply we have the very essence of the whole socialist system, and we must take this matter into our hands and find a practical solution for it. And we ask ourselves what is to be done about bread: are we to continue along the old, capitalist lines, with peasants taking advantage of the situation and making thousands of rubles profit out of grain, at the same time calling themselves working peasants, and sometimes even Left Socialist-Revolutionaries? (*Applause and commotion.*) They argue like this: if people are starving, grain prices will rise; if the towns are starving, I will stuff my pockets; and if the starvation becomes worse, I will make thousands more. But I know very well that the blame for this kind of argument does not lie with individuals. The whole abominable heritage of landowner and capitalist society has taught people to argue, to think and to live like this; and to reform the life of tens of millions of people is terribly difficult; it will require long and persistent work, and this work we have only just begun. We would never think of blaming people who, tormented by hunger and seeing no benefit in the organisation of a socialist system of bread distribution, scurry to look after themselves and let everything else go hang. These people cannot be blamed. But we do say that when it is a case of representatives of



parties, when it is a case of people belonging to a definite party, when it is a case of large bodies of people, we expect them to look at the matter, not from the standpoint of the suffering, tormented, hungry individual, against whom nobody would think of raising his hand, but from the standpoint of the building of a new society.

I repeat, it will never be possible to build socialism at a time when everything is running smoothly and tranquilly; it will never be possible to realise socialism without the landowners and capitalists putting up a furious resistance. The worse our situation is the more gleefully they rub their hands and the more they resort to revolt; the worse our situation is and the more saboteurs there are in our midst, the more eagerly they embark on all kinds of Czechoslovak and Krasnov affairs. And we say that the old way is not the way to cope with this, hard though it may be to drag the cart forward, uphill, instead of allowing it to slip back downhill. We know very well that not a week or even a day passed without the Council of People's Commissars considering the food problem, without our issuing thousands of recommendations, orders and decrees, and discussing how to combat famine. Some say there is no need for special prices, for fixed prices, for a grain monopoly: give people a free hand to trade. The rich will get richer still, and if the poor die of starvation, well, they always have. But a socialist cannot argue like that; at this moment, when the hill is steeper than ever and the cart has to be dragged up the steepest inclines, socialism has ceased to be a matter of party differences and has become a practical issue; it is a question of whether we can hold out against the kulaks, by allying ourselves with the peasants who do not profiteer in grain; it is a question of whether we can hold out now, when we have to fight, and work of the heaviest kind lies ahead of us. They talk about the 'Poor Peasants' Committees.'<sup>289</sup> Those who have seen the torments of hunger for themselves will clearly realise that in order to break and ruthlessly crush the kulaks, the most drastic and ruthless measures are required. When we proceeded to organise unions of poor peasants, we fully realised what a severe and drastic measure this was; but only an alliance of the towns with the rural poor and with those who have stocks but do not profiteer, with those who want to cope vigorously with the difficulties and ensure that the grain surpluses go to the state and are distributed among the working people—such an alliance is the sole method of waging this struggle. And the way to wage this struggle is not by means of programmes and speeches; this struggle with famine will show who is going the direct route to socialism, despite all trials and hardships, and who is succumbing to the trickery and deceit of the kulaks.

If there are people in the Left Socialist-Revolutionary party who, like the previous speaker—one of the sincerest, and therefore

one who is most liable to be carried away, most subject to changes of opinion—say that they cannot work with the Bolsheviks and are quitting, we shall not regret it for a minute. Socialists who quit at a moment like this, when hundreds and thousands of people are dying of hunger while others have such large surpluses of grain that they had not sold them before last August, when the fixed prices for grain were doubled—against which all democrats protested, those who know that the people are suffering untold torments of hunger yet do not want to sell their grain at the price at which the middle peasants are selling it, are enemies of the people, they are out to ruin the revolution and are lending their support to oppression—they are friends of the capitalists! War on such people, relentless war on them! (*General applause, in which a large number of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries take part.*) A thousand times wrong, a thousand times mistaken is he who allows himself even for a moment to be carried away by enemy talk and to say that this is a fight against the peasantry—as incautious or thoughtless Left Socialist-Revolutionaries sometimes do. No, this is a fight against that insignificant minority, the village kulaks, this is a fight to save socialism and to distribute bread in Russia properly. (*Voices: "What about goods?"*) We shall fight in alliance with the overwhelming majority of the peasants; we shall win this fight, and then every European worker will see in practice what socialism means.

We shall get help in this struggle from anyone who has been toiling all his life and who may not know scientifically what socialism means, but who knows that he earned his bread at a hard price. He will understand us. That man will be on our side. As for the kulaks who possess surpluses of grain and are capable of concealing that grain at a moment of extreme national calamity, at a moment when all the gains of the revolution are at stake, when the Skoropadskys of every hue and in every part of the country, occupied or not, are craning their necks and only waiting for the moment to overthrow the power of the workers and peasants by famine and reinstate the landowners—at such a moment it is our cardinal socialist duty to proclaim ruthless war on the kulaks. He is a poor socialist who at this moment of grave difficulty and severe trial for the starving people and for the socialist revolution washes his hands and repeats the lying tales of the bourgeoisie.

It is false, a thousand times false, to say this is a fight against the peasantry! I have seen this said hundreds of times in the columns of the Constitutional-Democratic newspapers, and I am not surprised to hear them crying that the workers have split with the peasantry. When they hysterically cry: "Peasants, open your eyes, come to your senses and have done with the Bolsheviks!"—when I hear and read things like this, I am not at all surprised. There it is

quite in place. These people are serving the master it is their function to serve. But I would not like to be in the skin of a socialist who sinks to talk like this! (*Loud applause.*) Comrades, we fully realise what incredible difficulties the solution of the food problem entails. Here the prejudices are most profound; here the interests are most deep-rooted—kulak interests; here division, stagnation, the scattered character of village life, ignorance—all, in many cases, are united against us. But we say that in spite of these difficulties, we cannot withdraw; famine is not a thing to be trifled with; and if the masses of the people do not receive assistance in this famine, hunger is capable of driving them even into the arms of Skoropadsky. It is false to say that this is a fight against the peasantry! Anyone who says that is an out-and-out criminal; those who have allowed themselves to be driven by hysteria to such talk are victims of a terrible misfortune. No, we are not even fighting the middle peasant, let alone the poor peasant. All over Russia, the middle peasants have only the smallest surpluses of grain. The middle peasants for decades before the revolution lived worse than the workers. Before the revolution their life was one of unrelieved want and oppression. Our policy towards these middle peasants is one of agreement.

The socialist revolution means equality for all the working people; it would be unfair for the urban worker to receive more than the middle peasant, who does not exploit the labour of others by hiring labour or profiteering; the peasants suffer from greater want and oppression than the workers, and fare even worse than the workers. They have no organisations or trade unions to work for the improvement of their conditions. Even with the workers' unions we find it necessary to hold dozens of meetings to try and level out wages among the various trades, and all the same cannot get them levelled. Every sensible worker knows that this will require a long time. See how many complaints are received by the Commissariat for Labour! You will find that every trade is raising its head; they don't want to live in the old way; they don't want to live like slaves, they say. In this poverty-stricken, destitute country we want to heal the wounds it has suffered. We must somehow or other save economic life, which has almost completely broken down. This can only be done by organisation. In order to organise the peasantry, we issued the decree about the Poor Peasants' Committees. Only the enemies of socialism can be opposed to this decree. We said that we considered it fair to lower the price of textiles. We are registering and nationalising positively everything. (*Applause.*) And that will permit us to regulate the distribution of the products of industry.

We said: cut the prices of textiles for the poor peasants by half, and for the middle peasants by 25 per cent. Perhaps these scales

*are wrong. We do not claim that our solution of the problem is right. We do not say that. To solve the problem rightly, go and do it together. (Applause.) Sitting in your armchairs in the chief administrations, fighting profiteering and trying to catch swindlers who are doing their dirty work in secret, is not going to solve the problem.*

Only when the Commissariat for Food, in conjunction with the Commissariat for Agriculture, nationalises all goods and fixes prices—do we really come close up to socialism. It is only the working people of the towns and the rural poor, all those who labour, do not rob others, do not exploit the labour of others either by hiring or by profiteering, only they come close to socialism—for the man who demands a hundred rubles or more for grain is no less a profiteer than the man who employs hired labour; perhaps he is even a worse, a more arrant profiteer. After a desperately difficult half-year of Soviet rule, we have now arrived at the organisation of the poor peasants. It is a pity we did not arrive at it after half a week—that is where we are to blame! If we had been reproached with having brought in the decree on the organisation of the poor peasants and the food dictatorship<sup>290</sup> six months too late, we should have welcomed the reproof. We say that only now that we have taken this path has socialism ceased to be a mere phrase and is becoming a practical thing. It is possible that the decree is unhappily conceived, that the scales are wrong. How were we to determine them? Only by your experience. How many times have we altered the railwaymen's scales, even though they have their trade unions, whereas the poor peasants have none! Let us co-operate in checking whether the scales laid down in the decree on the poor peasants are right, whether it is right to lower prices for the poor peasants by half and for the middle peasants by a quarter, and to take everything away from the rich peasants—whether these scales are right or not.

If there is to be a fight, we shall wage that fight by bold decrees without hesitating for a moment. It will be a real fight for socialism—not for a dogma, not for a programme, for a party, for a faction, but for living socialism, for the distribution of bread among hundreds of thousands and millions of starving people in the foremost districts of Russia, for taking grain wherever it is to be found and distributing it properly. I repeat, we do not doubt for a moment that ninety-nine peasants out of every hundred, when they learn the truth, when they receive the decree, test it, try it in practice and tell us how to correct it—and we will correct it, we will alter the scales—when they tackle this job and get an idea of its practical difficulty, these peasants will be on our side and will say, we are displaying the healthy instinct of the working man, and that this, and only this, will decide the real issue, the fundamental

and vital issue—socialism. We shall establish proper prices for goods, we shall establish a monopoly on grain, on textiles and on all products; and then the people will say: "Yes, the distribution of labour, the distribution of bread and other products inaugurated by socialism is better than it was before." And that is what the people are beginning to say. In spite of a host of difficulties and a host of mistakes, in spite of incidents which we make no attempt to conceal, but rather drag into the light and hold up to shame—cases when our detachments themselves succumb to profiteering, sink down into that slippery gulf into which all the capitalist habits and customs tend to drag people—yes, there are such cases everywhere, we know that people cannot be remoulded all at once, that you cannot inspire tens of millions of people with faith in socialism all at once (where are they to get this faith from? Not out of their own heads, surely? No, from their experience)—but in spite of all this, people are beginning to say that bread can be secured without profiteering, and that the only salvation from famine lies in an alliance of the urban, factory, industrial workers with the poor peasants, for only the poor peasant does not profiteer in grain. Yes, as soon as the middle peasant sees our decrees, reads them for himself, compares them with the talk and slanders of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the champions of the kulak, he will say that in establishing one scale for the poor peasants and another for the middle peasants, and in taking grain from the kulaks without compensation, we are acting rightly. He may not say that we are acting like socialists—he may not know that word—but he is our sure ally, for he does not profiteer in grain, and he will realise and agree that to profiteer in grain at a moment of direst danger to the socialist revolution is a heinous crime against the people.

Bread cannot be distributed by decree. But when, after long and persistent effort in establishing and improving the alliance of the factory, urban workers with the rural poor, with the working peasants who do not hire any labour, and do not engage in profiteering, we get this thing properly going, no hysterical outcries against our Party will succeed in rupturing that alliance. (*Applause*)

When we promised the peasants socialisation of the land we made a concession; for we understood that nationalisation could not be introduced at one stroke. We know that we may have made a mistake in embodying your socialisation of the land in our law of October 26 \*. It was a concession to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, who refused to be in the government and said they would only remain if this law were passed. Spiridonova is a thousand times wrong in bringing forward unconnected facts and saying that she came to see me, humbled herself and implored. Comrades, many of

---

See pp 427-28 of the present volume.—Ed

you have been to see me and know that that cannot have been the case, that no comrade could have been treated like that. It must be a bad party indeed whose best spokesmen stoop to spreading fairy-tales. (*Commotion.*) I have a letter from Comrade Spiridonova—she has often written to me. I shall find that letter tomorrow and make it known. She writes: “Why do you refuse to grant two million for agricultural communes?” And this on the very day when Sereda, the People’s Commissar for Agriculture, whose work she does not understand, submitted a proposal to assign ten million for agricultural communes. (*Prolonged applause.*) You heard Comrade Spiridonova say the same thing in her speech; but it must be a bad party indeed whose sincerest people stoop to spreading fairy-tales for propaganda purposes. I repeat, it must be a bad party indeed whose best and sincerest spokesmen go to the length of spreading such fairy-tales about the Soviet government! All the worse for them! Every peasant who comes to the Commissariat for Agriculture and reads that ten million have been assigned for agricultural communes will see and believe his own eyes and ears more than somebody else’s speeches, and will understand that these people have sunk so low as to spread fairy-tales, and he will turn his back on this party. (*Applause.*) I want to say only one thing in concluding my speech. Until the new harvest, until that harvest is brought to the starving localities of Petrograd and Moscow, a hard period of the Russian revolution lies before us. A really close alliance between the urban workers and the rural poor, the rural working masses who do not profiteer in grain, is the only thing that can save the revolution.

Our Congress shows that in spite of everything the alliance of all the working people is growing, spreading and gaining strength not only in Russia, but all over the world. Absurdly little, terribly little is known abroad about our revolution. The military censorship there lets nothing through. The comrades who returned from abroad have told us that; yet, in spite of everything, guided by sheer instinct, the European workers sympathise with the Bolshevik Government. And ever more numerous are voices showing that sympathy for the socialist revolution is growing in Europe in the countries where the imperialist war is still in progress. The Bolshevik Government is receiving expressions of gratitude, sympathy and support from German socialists and other men and women whose names are known to every enlightened worker and peasant, people like Clara Zetkin and Franz Mehring. In Italy, Lazzari, the old secretary of the party, who at Zimmerwald regarded the Bolsheviks with mistrust, is now in prison for having expressed his sympathy with us.

Understanding of the revolution is growing. In France, comrades and workers, who at the Zimmerwald Conference treated the Bol-

sheviks with profound mistrust, the other day issued a manifesto in the name of the Committee of International Relations<sup>291</sup> earnestly appealing for support of the Bolshevik Government and opposing adventures by any party.

And so, comrades, however difficult and arduous the period that lies ahead of us may be, it is our duty to tell the truth and to open people's eyes to this, for only the people, by their initiative and organisation, by advancing demand after demand and defending the socialist republic, can help us. And we say, comrades, that there is not a shadow of doubt that if we follow the path which we have chosen and which events have confirmed, if we follow this path firmly and unswervingly, if we do not allow ourselves to be diverted from the right path by any phrase-making, illusions, deceit or hysterics, we have every chance in the world of maintaining our position and of resolutely furthering the victory of socialism in Russia, and thus furthering the victory of the world socialist revolution! (*Loud and prolonged applause and cheers.*)

A newspaper report was published  
in *Izvestia* No. 139 and 140,  
July 6 and 7, 1918

Published in full in 1918  
in the book *The Fifth All Russia  
Congress of Soviets Verbatim  
Report* Published  
by the C F C

*Collected Works* Vol. 27,  
pp. 505-28

---

## **SPEECH AT A MEETING IN PRESNYA DISTRICT JULY 26, 1918**

*(Lenin's appearance was greeted with a prolonged standing ovation. The "Internationale" was sung.)* In his speech Lenin, in a clear and popular form, explained the essential features and basic points of the Soviet Constitution. The Soviets were the highest form of democratic government by the people. The Soviets were not something invented out of one's head, they were the product of living reality. They appeared and developed for the first time in history in our backward country, but objectively they should become the form of government by the working people all over the world.

All constitutions that had existed till now safeguarded the interests of the ruling classes. The Soviet Constitution was the only one that served and would constantly serve the working people and was a powerful weapon in the fight for socialism. Comrade Lenin very aptly pointed out the differences between the demands for "freedom of the press and assembly" in bourgeois constitutions and in the Soviet Constitution. There, freedom of the press and assembly was an exclusive monopoly of the bourgeoisie; there the bourgeoisie met in their saloons, issued their big dailies financed by the banks with the aim of sowing lies and slander and poisoning the minds of the masses; there the workers' press was strangled, not allowed to say what it thought about the predatory war; there, those opposed to the war were hounded and their meetings banned. Here in Soviet Russia, however, the workers' press existed and served the working people. In Russia we were taking the sumptuous houses and palaces away from the bourgeoisie and turning them over to the workers, to be used by them as clubs, and that was freedom of assembly in practice. Religion was a private concern. Everyone could believe in what he wants or believe in nothing. The Soviet Republic united the working people of all nations and defended the interests of the working people without national dis-



crimination. The Soviet Republic knew no religious distinctions. It stood above all religion and strove to separate religion from the Soviet state. Lenin went on to describe the Soviet Republic's difficult position, surrounded as it was on all sides by imperialist predators. Comrade Lenin expressed his confidence that the Red Army men would defend our Soviet Republic with all their might against all encroachments by international imperialism and would keep it safe until our ally—the international proletariat—came to our aid. (*Comrade Lenin's speech was greeted with prolonged and tumultuous applause. The "Internationale" was sung.*)

First published in 1957  
in the journal *Kommunist* No

*Collected Works*, Vol 42,  
pp 104 05

---

**SPEECH**  
**AT A JOINT SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA**  
**CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,**  
**THE MOSCOW SOVIET, FACTORY**  
**COMMITTEES**  
**AND TRADE UNIONS OF MOSCOW**  
**JULY 29, 1918<sup>292</sup>**

(*Applause, which grows into ovation.*) Comrades, this is not the first time we have pointed out in the Party press, in Soviet institutions and in our agitation among the people that the period up to the new harvest will be the most difficult, arduous and crucial phase in the socialist revolution that has begun in Russia. Now, I think, we must say that this crucial situation has reached its climax. That is because it has now become perfectly clear once and for all who are the supporters of the imperialist world, of the imperialist countries, and who are the supporters of the Soviet Socialist Republic. It should first be said that from the military standpoint the position of the Soviet Republic has only now become quite clear. Many at first regarded the Czechoslovak revolt as just one of the episodes in the chain of counter-revolutionary revolts. We did not sufficiently appreciate the news in the papers about the participation in this revolt of British and French capital, of the British and French imperialists. We must now recall how events developed in Murmansk, among the Siberian troops and in the Kuban, how the British and French, in alliance with the Czechs, with the closest co-operation of the British bourgeoisie, endeavoured to overthrow the Soviets. All these facts now show that the Czechoslovak movement was one link in the chain long since forged by the systematic policy of the British and French imperialists to throttle Soviet Russia so as to again drag Russia into the ring of imperialist wars. This crisis must now be resolved by the broad mass of the people of Soviet Russia, for we are today faced not only with a struggle to preserve the Soviet Socialist Republic from the Czech attack, as one particular counter-revolutionary assault, and not even from counter-revolutionary assaults in general, but with a struggle against the onslaught of the whole imperialist world.

I should like first of all to remind you of the fact that the direct participation of the British and French imperialists in the Czecho-

slovak revolt has long been established; I would remind you of an article printed by *Průkopník Svobody*,<sup>293</sup> the central organ of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, on June 28 and reprinted in our press:

"On March 7, the Department of the National Council received the first instalment from the French Consul to the amount of three million rubles.

This money was handed to a certain Mr. Šíp, an official of the Department of the National Council.

On March 9, this same Šíp received another two million and on March 25 another million, and on March 26, Mr. Bohumil-Čermák, Vice-President of the National Council, received one million; on April 3, Mr. Šíp received another million.

In all, from March 7 to April 4, the French Consul paid the Department of the National Council 8 million rubles.

No dates are indicated for the following payments: Mr. Šíp one million, Mr. Bohumil-Čermák one million and Mr. Šíp another million.

In addition, a sum of 188,000 rubles was paid to an unknown person. Total: 3,188,000 rubles. Together with the above-mentioned 8 million we get a total of 11,188,000 rubles paid by the French Government to the Department of the National Council.

From the British Consul the Department received £80,000. Thus, from March 7 to the date of action, the leaders of the Czech National Council received about 15 million rubles from the French and British governments, and for this sum the Czechoslovak army was sold to the French and British imperialists."

The majority of you, of course, read this report in the newspapers at the time it was published. We certainly never doubted that the imperialists and financial magnates of Britain and France would do their very utmost to overthrow the Soviet government and place every possible obstacle in its way. But at that time the picture was not yet complete to show that what we are faced with here is a systematic, methodical and evidently long-planned counter-revolutionary military and financial campaign against the Soviet Republic, which all the representatives of British and French imperialism had evidently been preparing for months. The general trend of events becomes clear now when we review them as a whole, when we compare the Czechoslovak counter-revolutionary movement with the Murmansk landing—where we know the British have disembarked over ten thousand soldiers, and under the pretext of defending Murmansk have actually begun to advance, have occupied Kem and Soroki, have moved to the east of Soroki, and have begun to shoot our Soviet officials—and when we read in the newspapers that many thousands of railwaymen and other workers of the Far North are fleeing from these saviours and liberators, or, to give them their true name, these new imperialist bandits who are rending Russia from another end. And quite recently we received new confirmation of the character of the Anglo-French offensive against Russia.

For geographical considerations alone it is clear that the form of this imperialist offensive against Russia cannot be the same as it was in the case of Germany. There are no common frontiers with Russia, as in the case of Germany; troop strength is less. In her wars of conquest, Britain has been compelled for many decades, owing to the primarily colonial and naval character of her military might, to employ different methods of attack, to attempt chiefly to cut off her victim's supply sources, and to prefer the method of strangulation, under pretext of aid, to open, direct, blunt and outright military force. From information recently received, it is clear that Alexeyev, who has long been notorious among the Russian soldiers and workers and who recently seized the village of Tikho-retskaya, has undoubtedly been utilising the aid of British and French imperialism. There the revolt was more clear-cut, again apparently because British and French imperialism had a hand in it.

Lastly, we received news yesterday that in Baku the British and French imperialists have succeeded in making a very effective move. They have managed to secure a majority of about thirty votes in the Baku Soviet, over our Party, over the Bolsheviks, and those Left Socialist-Revolutionaries—unfortunately, very few in number—who refused to fall in with the despicable gambles and treachery of the Moscow Left Socialist-Revolutionaries,<sup>294</sup> and who have remained loyal to the Soviet government in the struggle against imperialism and war. Over this nucleus in the Baku Soviet which is loyal to the Soviet government and which up to now constituted the majority, the British and French imperialists have now secured a majority of thirty votes, owing to the fact that the greater part of the Dashnaksutyun Party,<sup>295</sup> the Armenian quasi-socialists, have sided with them against us. (*Reads telegram.*)

"On July 26, on the orders of People's Commissar Korganov, the Adjikabul detachment retired from Adjikabul to a position near Alyat. After the withdrawal of the Shemakha detachment from Shemakha and Maraza the enemy began to advance along the River Pirsagat valley: the first skirmish with the enemy's vanguard occurred near the village of Kubala.

Simultaneously from the south, from the direction of the Kura, a large force of cavalry began to advance towards Pirsagat. Under the circumstances, to hold Adjikabul we would have had to deploy all our available forces on three sides: to the west of Adjikabul, and to the north and south of the Navagi-Pirsagat valley. Such an extension of the front would have left us without reserves and would have made it impossible for us to strike at the enemy as we have no cavalry, and would even have endangered the group at Adjikabul if the front had been broken from the north or south. In view of this situation, and in order to conserve the strength of the troops, orders were given to the detachment to retreat from Adjikabul to a position near Alyat. The retreat was carried out in good order. Important railway installations and the Adjikabul station, as well as the kerosene and oil tanks, have been blown up. In Daghestan, the enemy is on the move as part of the general offensive. On July 24, the enemy advanced in large forces in four directions. After twenty-four hours' fighting we occupied

the enemy's trenches; the foe dispersed into the woods and nightfall prevented further pursuit. On July 24, news of successes was received from Shura, where fighting is going on around the town; the enemy is putting up a stubborn and organised resistance, and is commanded by former Daghestan officers. Daghestan peasants are taking an active part in the fighting around Shura.

The Right-wing parties in Baku have raised their heads and are vigorously campaigning to call in the British. This campaign is strongly backed by the army officers and is being conducted among the forces at the front. Anglophil agitation has disorganised the army. The British orientation has recently been making great headway among the worn-out and despairing people.

Under the influence of the unscrupulous and provocative activities of the Right-wing parties, the Caspian flotilla has adopted several contradictory resolutions in regard to the British. Deceived by British hirelings and volunteer agents, until quite recently it blindly believed in the sincerity of British support.

Latest reports say that the British are advancing in Persia and have occupied Resht (Giljan), where for four days they have been engaged against Ku-huk-Khan and the German and Turkish bands, who have joined forces with him, headed by Mussavatists who had fled from Baku. After the Resht battle the British applied to us for assistance, but our representatives in Persia refused. The British got the upper hand in Resht. But they have practically no forces in Persia. We know they have only fifty men in Enzeli. They need petrol, in exchange for which they are offering us cars. Without petrol they are stuck.

On July 25, a second session of the Soviet was held to discuss the political and military situation, and at the insistence of the Right-wing parties the question of the British was raised. Comrade Shahumyan, Commissar Extraordinary for the Caucasus, citing the resolution of the Fifth Congress of Soviets and Stalin's telegram on behalf of the Central Council of People's Commissars, spoke against inviting the British and demanded that this question be struck from the agenda. Comrade Shahumyan's move was defeated by a small majority, whereupon, as representative of the central government, he entered a vigorous protest. The session heard the report of the delegates who had visited the front. By 259 votes of the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, Right Dashnaks and Mensheviks against 236 votes of the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Left Dashnaks, a resolution was adopted to invite the British and form a government comprising members of all parties represented in the Soviet and recognising the power of the Council of People's Commissars. The resolution was sharply condemned by the Left wing. Shahumyan declared that he regarded it as a shameful betrayal and stark ingratitude towards the workers and peasants of Russia and that as the central government's representative, he renounced all responsibility for the decision. A statement was made on behalf of the group of the Bolsheviks, Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and Left Dashnaks to the effect that they would not join the coalition government and that the Council of People's Commissars would resign. Comrade Shahumyan declared in the name of the three Left groups that a government which had in fact broken with the Russian Soviet government by inviting the British imperialists would receive no support from Soviet Russia. By its treacherous policy of inviting the British, the local Soviet had lost Russia and the parties supporting the Soviet government.

The Right-wing parties were thrown into utter confusion at the decision of the Council of People's Commissars to resign. When news of this situation got around there was an abrupt change of sentiment in the districts and at the front. The sailors realised they had been duped by traitors who want to break with Russia and bring down the Soviet government. The people are having second thoughts about the British. Yesterday, an urgent meeting of the Executive Committee was held over the resignation of the Council of People's Commissars. It was decided that all the People's Commissars should remain at their

posts and continue their former functions pending decision of the question of power at the Soviet's session on July 31. The Executive Committee has decided to take urgent measures to combat the threatening counter-revolution. The foe is carrying on activities under the wing of the Anglo-French parties.

Press Bureau of the Baku Council of People's Commissars."

Not unlike the groups here who call themselves socialists but have never broken off relations with the bourgeoisie, there, too, these people came out in favour of inviting the British troops to defend Baku.<sup>296</sup> We already know only too well the meaning of such an invitation to imperialist troops to defend the Soviet Republic. We know the meaning of this invitation extended by the bourgeoisie, a section of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, and by the Mensheviks. We know the meaning of this invitation extended by the Menshevik leaders in Tiflis, Georgia.

We may now say that the Bolshevik, the Communist Party is the only party which has never invited imperialists and has never entered into a rapacious alliance with them, but has only retreated before these cutthroats when they pressed too hard. (*Applause.*) We know our Communist comrades in the Caucasus were in a very difficult position because the Mensheviks betrayed them everywhere by entering into direct alliance with the German imperialists, on the pretext, of course, of defending Georgia's independence.

You are all aware that this independence of Georgia has become a sheer fraud. In actual fact it amounts to the occupation and complete seizure of Georgia by the German imperialists, an alliance of German bayonets with the Menshevik government against the Bolshevik workers and peasants. And, therefore, our Baku comrades were a thousand times right in refusing to close their eyes to the danger of the situation and saying: We would never be opposed to peace with an imperialist power on the basis of ceding part of our territory, provided this would not harm us, would not bind our troops in an alliance with the bayonets of the aggressors and would not prevent us from carrying on our socialist reconstruction.

But since, as the question now stands, by inviting the British, supposedly for the defence of Baku, they are inviting a power which has now swallowed up the whole of Persia and which has long been moving up its forces for seizing the Southern Caucasus—that is, surrendering themselves to British and French imperialism—we cannot doubt or hesitate for a moment and must say that, however difficult the position of our Baku comrades may be, by refusing to conclude such a peace they have taken the only step worthy of true socialists. This resolute rejection of any agreement whatsoever with the British and French imperialists was the only true course for our Baku comrades to take, for you cannot invite

them without converting your independent socialist government, even though on severed territory, into a slave of imperialist war.

We therefore do not entertain the slightest doubt as to the significance of the Baku events in the general scheme of things. Yesterday, news was received that counter-revolutionary revolts have broken out in a number of towns in Central Asia with the obvious complicity of the British entrenched in India, who, having brought Afghanistan completely under their sway, long ago created a base for extending their colonial possessions, strangling nations, and attacking Soviet Russia. And now, when these separate links have become quite clear to us, the present military and general strategic position of our Republic has been fully revealed. Murmansk in the North, the Czechoslovak front in the East, Turkestan, Baku and Astrakhan in the South-East—we see that practically all the links in the chain forged by British and French imperialism have been joined.

We now clearly see that the landowners, the capitalists and the kulaks, all of whom, of course, for perfectly natural reasons have a burning hatred for the Soviet government, are acting here, too, in ways greatly resembling those of the landowners, capitalists and kulaks in the Ukraine and in other regions severed from Russia. As the lackeys of British and French imperialism, they have done their utmost to undermine the Soviet government at all costs. Realising they could not do it with forces inside Russia alone, they decided to act not by words or appeals in the spirit of the Martov gentry, but by resorting to more effective methods of struggle—military hostilities. That is where our attention should be chiefly directed; that is where we should concentrate all our agitation and propaganda; and we should shift the centre of the whole of our Soviet work accordingly.

The fundamental fact is that it is the imperialist forces of the other coalition that are now at work, not the German, but the Anglo-French, which have seized part of our territory and are using it as a base. Up to now their geographical position has prevented them from attacking Russia by the direct route; now British and French imperialism, which for four years has been drenching the whole world in blood in a bid for world supremacy, has by an indirect route approached within easy reach of Russia, with the object of strangling the Soviet Republic and once more plunging Russia into imperialist war. You are all perfectly aware, comrades, that from the very beginning of the October Revolution our chief aim has been to put a stop to the imperialist war; but we never harboured the illusion that the forces of the proletariat and the revolutionary people of any one country, however heroic and however organised and disciplined they might be, could overthrow

international imperialism. That can be done only by the joint efforts of the workers of the world.

What we have done, however, is to sever all connections with the capitalists of the whole world in one country. Our government is not tied by a single thread to any kind of imperialist and never will be, whatever future course our revolution may take. The revolutionary movement against imperialism during the eight months of our rule has made tremendous strides, and in one of the chief centres of imperialism, Germany, matters in January 1918 came to an armed clash and the bloody suppression of that movement.<sup>297</sup> We have done our revolutionary duty as no revolutionary government in any country has ever done on an international, world-wide scale. But we never deceived ourselves into thinking this could be done by the efforts of one country alone. We knew that our efforts were inevitably leading to a world-wide revolution, and that the war begun by the imperialist governments could not be stopped by the efforts of those governments themselves. It can be stopped only by the efforts of all workers; and when we came to power, our task as the proletarian Communist Party, at a time when capitalist bourgeois rule still remained in the other countries—our immediate task, I repeat, was to retain that power, that torch of socialism, so that it might scatter as many sparks as possible to add to the growing flames of socialist revolution.

This was everywhere an extremely difficult task; and what enabled us to accomplish it was the fact that the proletariat rallied to the defence of the gains of the Socialist Republic. This task has led to a particularly arduous and critical situation, for the socialist revolution, in the direct sense of the term, has not yet begun in any country, although it is more imminent in countries like Italy and Austria. But as it has not yet begun, we are faced with a new success of British and French, and therefore world, imperialism. Whereas from the West, German imperialism continues to stand as a military, annexatory, imperialist force, from the North-East and South of Russia, British and French imperialism has been able to dig itself in and is making it patently obvious to us that this force is prepared once more to plunge Russia into imperialist war, is prepared to crush Russia, the independent socialist state that is continuing its socialist work and propaganda on a scale hitherto unparalleled anywhere in the world. Against this, British and French imperialism has won a big victory, and, surrounding us on all sides, it is doing its utmost to crush Soviet Russia. We are fully aware that British and French imperialism's victory is inseparably connected with the class struggle.

We have always said—and revolutions bear it out—that when the foundations of the exploiters' economic power are at stake, their property, which places the labour of tens of millions of work-



ers and peasants at their disposal and enables the landowners and capitalists to enrich themselves, when, I repeat, the private property of the capitalists and landowners is at stake, they forget all talk about love for one's country and independence. We know full well that the Cadets, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have beaten the record in concluding alliances with the imperialist powers, in concluding predatory treaties and betraying the country to Anglo-French imperialism. The Ukraine and Tiflis are good examples. The alliance of the Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries with the Czechs is sufficient proof of this. And the action of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, when they tried to embroil the Russian Republic in war in the interests of the Yaroslavl whiteguards,<sup>298</sup> shows quite clearly that when their class profits are at stake, the bourgeoisie will sell their country and strike a bargain with any foreigner against their own people. This truth has time and again been borne out by the history of the Russian revolution, after the history of revolution over a hundred years had shown that that is the law of the class interests, of the class policy of the bourgeoisie, at all times and in all countries. It is therefore by no means surprising that the present aggravation of the Soviet Republic's international position is connected with the aggravation of the class struggle at home.

We have often said that, in this respect, in regard to the aggravation of the food crisis, the period until the new harvest will be the most difficult. Russia is being flayed with the scourge of famine, which has attained unparalleled proportions precisely because it is the plan of the imperialist robbers to cut off her granaries. Their calculations are well founded and are aimed at getting social and class support in the grain-producing outlying regions; they seek areas where the kulaks predominate—the rich peasants, who have battered on the war and who live by the labour of others, the labour of the poor. You know that these people have piled up hundreds of thousands of rubles and that they have huge stocks of grain. You know that it is these people who have battered on national misfortunes and who had greater opportunity to rob and increase their profits the more the population of the capital suffered—it is these kulaks who have constituted the chief and most formidable buttress of the counter-revolutionary movement in Russia. Here the class struggle has reached its deepest source. There is not a village left where the class struggle is not raging between a miserable handful of kulaks on the one hand and the vast labouring majority—the poor and those middle peasants who have no grain surpluses, who have consumed them long ago, and who did not go in for profiteering—on the other. This class struggle has penetrated every village.

When we were determining our political plans and publishing

our decrees—the vast majority of those present here are, of course, familiar with them—when, I repeat, we drafted and passed the decrees on the organisation of the poor peasants, it was clear to us we were coming up against the most decisive and fundamental issue of the whole revolution, the most decisive and fundamental issue, the issue of power—whether power would remain in the hands of the workers; whether they could gain the support of all the poor peasants, with whom they have no differences; whether they would succeed in winning over the peasants with whom they have no disagreement, and unite this whole mass, which is dispersed, disunited and scattered through the villages—in which respect it lags behind the urban workers; whether they could unite them against the other camp, the camp of the landowners, the imperialists and kulaks.

Before our very eyes the poor peasants have begun to rally together very quickly. It is said that revolution teaches. The class struggle does indeed teach in practice that any false note in the position of any party immediately lands that party where it deserves to be. We have clearly seen the policy of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, who, because of their spinelessness and stupidity, started to vacillate at a time when the food problem was at its height, and that party disappeared from the scene as a party and became a pawn in the hands of the Yaroslavl whiteguards. (*Applause.*)

Comrades, the wave of revolts sweeping Russia is easy to understand in the light of this sharpening of the class struggle over the food crisis at the very time when we know the new harvest is a bumper one but cannot yet be gathered, and when the hunger-tormented people of Petrograd and Moscow are being driven to revolt by the kulaks and the bourgeoisie, who are making the most desperate efforts, crying "Now or never!" There is the revolt in Yaroslavl. And we can see the influence of the British and French: we see the calculations of the counter-revolutionary landowners and bourgeoisie. Wherever the question of grain arose, they obstructed the grain monopoly, without which there can be no socialism. That is just where the bourgeoisie are bound to unite; here the bourgeoisie have a stronger backing than the country yokel. The decisive fight between the forces of socialist and bourgeois society is bound to come in any case, whatever happens, if not today, then tomorrow, on one issue or another. Only pseudo-socialists, like our Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, for example, can waver. When socialists waver over this question, over this fundamental question, it means they are only pseudo-socialists, and are not worth a brass farthing. The effect of the revolution has virtually been to turn such socialists into mere pawns in the hands of the French generals, pawns whose role was demonstrated by the former Central Committee of the former Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party.

Comrades, the result of these combined efforts of the counter-revolutionary Russian bourgeoisie and the British and French imperialists has been that the Civil War in our country is now coming from a quarter which not all of us anticipated and from which not all of us clearly realised it might come, and it has merged with the war from without into one indivisible whole. The kulak revolt, the Czechoslovak mutiny and the Murmansk movement are all part of one and the same war that is bearing down on Russia. We escaped from war in one quarter by incurring tremendous losses and signing an incredibly harsh peace treaty; we knew we were concluding a predatory peace, but we said we would be able to continue our propaganda and our constructive work, and in that way cause the imperialist world's disintegration. We have succeeded in doing so. Germany is now negotiating with us as to how many thousand millions to extort from Russia on the basis of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, but she has recognised all the acts of nationalisation we proclaimed under the decree of June 28.<sup>299</sup> She has not raised the question of private ownership of land in the Republic; this point must be stressed as a counterblast to the fantastic lies spread by Spiridonova and similar leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, lies that have brought grist to the mill of the landowners and are now being repeated by the most ignorant and backward Black-Hundred elements. These lies must be nailed.

The fact of the matter is that, burdensome as the peace treaty may be, we have won freedom to carry on socialist construction at home, and have taken steps in this direction which are now becoming known in Western Europe and constitute elements of propaganda that are incomparably more effective than any before.

So, having got out of war in one quarter, with one coalition, we have been at once subjected to an imperialist assault from another quarter. Imperialism is a world-wide phenomenon; it is a struggle for the division of the whole world, of the whole earth, for the domination of one or another group of robbers. Now another group of vultures, the Anglo-French, are hurling themselves at our throats and threatening to drag us into war again. Their war is merging with the Civil War into one continuous whole, and that is the chief source of our difficulties at present, when the question of war, of military hostilities, has again come to the fore as the cardinal and fundamental question of the revolution. There lies the whole difficulty, for the people are tired of war, exhausted by it as never before. The Russian people's state of extreme war fatigue and exhaustion is rather like that of a man who has been thrashed within an inch of his life, and who cannot be expected to show any energy or working capacity. And in the same way this nearly four years' war, overwhelming a country which had been despoiled, tormented, and defiled by tsarism, by the autocracy, the bourgeoisie

and Kerensky, has for many reasons naturally aroused a feeling of abhorrence in the Russian people, and is one of the chief sources of the tremendous difficulties we are now experiencing.

Yet such a turn of events definitely made for war. We have again been plunged into war, we are in a state of war; and it is not only civil war, war against the kulaks, the landowners and the capitalists who have united against us—now we are faced with British and French imperialism. The imperialists are still not in a position to throw their armies against Russia—they are prevented by geographical conditions; but they are devoting all they can, all their millions, all their diplomatic connections and forces, to aid our enemies. We are in a state of war, and we can emerge triumphant. But here we come up against a formidable enemy, one of the most difficult to cope with—war-weariness, hatred and abhorrence of war; and this must be overcome, otherwise we shall not be able to tackle this problem—the problem of war—which does not depend on our will. Our country has again been plunged into war, and the outcome of the revolution will now entirely depend on who is the victor. The principal protagonists are the Czechs, but the real directors, the real motive and actuating power are the British and French imperialists. The whole question of the existence of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the whole question of the Russian socialist revolution has been reduced to a question of war. There lie tremendous difficulties, considering the state in which the people have emerged from the imperialist war. Our task is now perfectly clear. Any deceit would be tremendously harmful; we consider it a crime to conceal this bitter truth from the workers and peasants. On the contrary, let the truth be brought home to them all as clearly and graphically as possible.

Yes, there have been cases when our troops displayed criminal weakness, as, for example, during the capture of Simbirsk by the Czechs, when our forces retreated. We know the troops are tired of war and loathe it; but it is also natural and inevitable that until imperialism is defeated internationally, it should attempt to drag Russia into imperialist war, endeavour to make a shambles of her. Whether we like it or not, the question stands as follows: we are in a war, and on the outcome of that war hangs the fate of the revolution. That should be the first and last word in our propaganda work, in all our political, revolutionary, and construction activities. We have done very much in a short time, but the job is not yet over. All our activities must be entirely and completely geared to this question, on which the fate and outcome of the revolution, the fate of the Russian and world revolution now depends. Of course, world imperialism cannot get out of the present war without a number of revolutions; this war cannot end otherwise than by the ultimate victory of socialism. But our task now is to main-

tain, protect and uphold this force of socialism, this torch of socialism, this source of socialism which is so actively influencing the whole world. And as matters now stand, this task is a military task.

This is not the first time we have been in such a situation, and many of us have said that however severe the price we had to pay for peace, however grave the sacrifices it demanded of us, however much the enemy was striving to rob us of more and more territory, Russia so far, in the face of great odds, was enjoying peace and in a position to consolidate her socialist gains. We have even gone farther in this direction than many of us expected. For example, our workers' control has advanced a long way from its early forms, and today we are about to witness the conversion of the state administration into a socialist system. We have made great strides in our practical affairs. We now have the workers completely running industry. But circumstances have prevented us from continuing that work in peace; they have once again plunged us into war, and we must strain every nerve and summon everyone to arms. It would be a disgrace for any Communist to be in two minds over this.

Vacillation among the peasants does not surprise us. The peasants have not been through the same school of life as the workers, who have been accustomed for decades to look upon the capitalist as their class enemy, and who have learned to unite their forces to combat him. We know the peasants have not been through such a university. At one time they sided with the workers but today we are witnessing a period of vacillation, when the peasants are splitting up. We know any number of instances of kulaks selling grain to the peasants below the fixed prices in order to create the impression that they, the kulaks, are defending the peasants' interests. None of this surprises us. But the Communist worker will not waver, the working class will stand firm; and if a kulak spirit prevails among the peasants, it is quite understandable. Where the Czechs rule and the Bolsheviks no longer are, we have the following picture: at first the Czechs are hailed practically as deliverers; but after a few weeks of this bourgeois rule, a tremendous movement against the Czechs and in favour of the Soviet government arises, because the peasants begin to realise that all talk about freedom of trade and a Constituent Assembly means only one thing—the rule of the landowners and capitalists.

Our job is to get the workers to rally and to create an organisation under which within the next few weeks everything will be devoted to solving the war issue. We are now at war with British and French imperialism and with everything bourgeois and capitalist in Russia, with everyone endeavouring to frustrate the socialist revolution and embroil us in war. The situation is one where all

the gains of the workers and peasants are at stake. We may be confident that we shall have the broad sympathy and support of the proletariat, and then the danger will be completely averted, and new ranks of the proletariat will come forward to stand up for their class and save the socialist revolution. As matters now stand, the struggle is being fought over two major issues, and all the main party differences have been obliterated in the fires of revolution. The Left Socialist-Revolutionary who keeps insistently reminding us that he is on the left, concealing himself behind a cloud of revolutionary phrases, while actually revolting against the Soviet government, is just the same a hireling of the Yaroslavl white-guards. That is what he is in history and the revolutionary struggle! Today only two classes confront each other in the battle arena: the class struggle is between the proletariat, which is protecting the interests of the working people, and those protecting the interests of the landowners and capitalists. All talk about a Constituent Assembly, about an independent state and so on, which is being used to dupe the ignorant masses, has been exposed by the experience of the Czech and Caucasian Menshevik movements. Behind all this talk stand the same forces—the landowners and capitalists; and the Czech mutiny brings in its train the rule of the landowners and capitalists, just as the German occupation does. That is what the war is about!

Comrades, the workers must close their ranks more firmly than ever and set an example of organisation and discipline in this struggle. Russia is still the only country which has severed all ties with the imperialists. True, we are bleeding from grave wounds. We have retreated in the face of the imperialist brute, playing for time, striking a blow at it here and there. But, as the Socialist Soviet Republic, we have remained independent. Performing our socialist work, we opposed the imperialism of the whole world; and this struggle is becoming clearer and clearer to the workers of the world, and their mounting indignation is bringing them nearer and nearer to the future revolution. It is over this that the struggle is being waged, because our Republic is the only country in the world not to march hand in hand with imperialism and not to allow millions of people to be slaughtered to decide whether the French or the Germans will rule the world. Our Republic is the only country to have broken away by force, by revolutionary means, from the world imperialist war, and to have raised the banner of socialist revolution. But it is being dragged back into the imperialist war, and being forced into the trenches. Let the Czechs fight the Germans, let the Russian bourgeoisie make their choice, let Milyukov decide, perhaps even in concurrence with Spiridonova and Kamkov, which imperialists to side with. But we declare we must be prepared to lay down our lives to prevent them deciding this ques-

tion, for the salvation of the whole socialist revolution is at stake. (*Applause.*) I know there is a change of spirit among the peasants of the Saratov, Samara, and Simbirsk gubernias, where fatigue was most marked and fitness for military action was lowest of all. After experiencing the ravages of the Cossacks and Czechs, and having a real taste of what the Constituent Assembly and the cries "Down with the Brest Peace Treaty!" mean, they have realised that all this only leads to the return of the landowner, to the capitalist mounting the throne—and they are now becoming the most ardent champions of Soviet power. I have not the slightest doubt that the Petrograd and Moscow workers, who are marching at the head of the revolution, will understand the situation, will understand the gravity of the times and will act with greater determination than ever, and that the proletariat will smash both the Anglo-French and the Czech offensive in the interests of the socialist revolution. (*Applause.*)

Published in 1918 in the pamphlet  
*Joint Session of the All Russia Central  
Executive Committee the Moscow Soviet  
Delegates of Factory Committees and  
Trade Unions of Moscow and of the  
All-Russia Congress of Delegates of  
the Soviets, July 29, 1918*

*Collected Works Vol 28*  
pp 17-34

Published in 1919 in the book,  
*All Russia Central Executive Committee,  
15th Convocation. Verbatim Report*

---

## COMRADE WORKERS, FORWARD TO THE LAST, DECISIVE FIGHT!

The Soviet Republic is surrounded by enemies. But it will defeat its enemies at home and abroad. A rising spirit which will ensure victory is already perceptible among the working people. We already see how frequent the sparks and explosions of the revolutionary conflagration in Western Europe have become, inspiring us with the assurance that the triumph of the world workers' revolution is not far off.

The external foe of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic at present is British, French, American and Japanese imperialism. This foe is attacking Russia, is plundering our territory, has seized Archangel and (if the French newspapers are to be believed) has advanced from Vladivostok to Nikolsk-Ussuriisky. This foe has bribed the generals and officers of the Czechoslovak Corps. This enemy is attacking peaceful Russia with the ferocity and voracity of the Germans in February, the only difference being that the British and Japanese are out to seize and plunder Russian territory and to overthrow the Soviet government so as to "restore the front", i.e., to draw Russia again into the imperialist (or more simply, the predatory) war between Britain and Germany.

The British and Japanese capitalists want to restore the power of the landowners and capitalists in Russia in order to share with them the booty captured in the war; they want to shackle the Russian workers and peasants to British and French capital, to squeeze out of them interest on the billions advanced in loans, and to extinguish the fire of socialist revolution which has broken out in our country and which is threatening to spread across the world.

The British and Japanese imperialist savages are not strong enough to occupy and subjugate Russia. Even neighbouring Germany is not strong enough for that, as was shown by her "experience" in the Ukraine. The British and Japanese counted on taking us unawares. They failed. The Petrograd workers, followed by



the Moscow workers, and after Moscow the workers of the entire central industrial region, are rising more unitedly, with growing persistence and courage and in ever larger numbers. That is a sure sign we shall win.

In launching their attack on peaceful Russia the British and Japanese capitalist robbers are also counting on alliance with the internal enemy of the Soviet government. We all know who that internal enemy is. It is the capitalists, the landowners, the kulaks, and their offspring, who hate the government of the workers and working peasants—the peasants who do not suck the blood of their fellow-villagers.

A wave of kulak revolts is sweeping across Russia. The kulak hates the Soviet government like poison and is prepared to strangle and massacre hundreds of thousands of workers. We know very well that if the kulaks were to gain the upper hand they would ruthlessly slaughter hundreds of thousands of workers, in alliance with the landowners and capitalists, restore back-breaking conditions for the workers, abolish the eight-hour day and hand back the mills and factories to the capitalists.

That was the case in all earlier European revolutions when, as a result of the weakness of the workers, the kulaks succeeded in turning back from a republic to a monarchy, from a working people's government to the despotism of the exploiters, the rich and the parasites. This happened before our very eyes in Latvia, Finland, the Ukraine and Georgia. Everywhere the avaricious, bloated and bestial kulaks joined hands with the landowners and capitalists against the workers and against the poor generally. Everywhere the kulaks wreaked their vengeance on the working class with incredible ferocity. Everywhere they joined hands with *the foreign capitalists* against the workers of their own country. That is the way the Cadets, the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks have been acting: we have only to remember their exploits in "Czechoslovakia".<sup>300</sup> That is the way the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, in their crass stupidity and spinelessness, acted too when they revolted in Moscow, thus assisting the whiteguards in Yaroslavl and the Czechs and the Whites in Kazan. No wonder these Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were praised by Kerensky and his friends, the French imperialists.

There is no doubt about it. The kulaks are rabid foes of the Soviet government. Either the kulaks massacre vast numbers of workers, or the workers ruthlessly suppress the revolts of the predatory kulak minority of the people against the working people's government. There can be no middle course. Peace is out of the question: even if they have quarrelled, the kulak can easily come to terms with the landowner, the tsar and the priest, but with the working class *never*.

That is why we call the fight against the kulaks the *last*, decisive fight. That does not mean there may not be many more kulak revolts, or that there may not be many more attacks on the Soviet government by foreign capitalism. The words, the *last* fight, imply that the last and most numerous of the *exploiting* classes has revolted against us in our country.

The kulaks are the most brutal, callous and savage exploiters, who in the history of other countries have time and again restored the power of the landowners, tsars, priests and capitalists. The kulaks are more numerous than the landowners and capitalists. Nevertheless, they are a minority.

Let us take it that there are about fifteen million peasant families in Russia, taking Russia as she was before the robbers deprived her of the Ukraine and other territories. Of these fifteen million, probably ten million are poor peasants who live by selling their labour power, or who are in bondage to the rich, or who lack grain surpluses and have been most impoverished by the burdens of war. About three million must be regarded as middle peasants, while barely two million consist of kulaks, rich peasants, grain profiteers. These blood-suckers have grown rich on the want suffered by the people in the war; they have raked in thousands and hundreds of thousands of rubles by pushing up the price of grain and other products. These spiders have grown fat at the expense of the peasants ruined by the war, at the expense of the starving workers. These leeches have sucked the blood of the working people and grown richer as the workers in the cities and factories starved. These vampires have been gathering the landed estates into their hands; they continue to enslave the poor peasants.

Ruthless war on the kulaks! Death to them! Hatred and contempt for the parties which defend them—the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, and today's Left Socialist-Revolutionaries! The workers must crush the revolts of the kulaks with an iron hand, the kulaks who are forming an alliance with the foreign capitalists against the working people of their own country.

The kulaks take advantage of the ignorance, the disunity and isolation of the poor peasants. They incite them against the workers. Sometimes they bribe them while permitting them to "make a bit", a hundred rubles or so, by profiteering in grain (at the same time robbing the poor peasants of many thousands of rubles). The kulaks try to win the support of the middle peasants, and they sometimes succeed.

But there is no reason why the working class should quarrel with the middle peasant. The workers cannot come to terms with the kulak, but they may seek, and are seeking, an *agreement* with the middle peasant. The workers' government, the Bolshevik government, *has proved* that in deed.

We proved it by passing the law on the "socialisation of land" and strictly carrying it into effect. That law contains *numerous* concessions to the interests and views of the middle peasant.

We proved it (the other day) by *trebling* grain prices<sup>301</sup>; for we fully realise that the earnings of the middle peasant are often disproportionate to present-day prices for manufactured goods and *must* be raised.

Every class-conscious worker will explain this to the middle peasant and will patiently, persistently, and repeatedly point out to him that socialism is infinitely more beneficial for him than a government of the tsars, landowners and capitalists.

The workers' government has never wronged and never will wrong the middle peasant. But the government of the tsars, landowners, capitalists and kulaks not only always wronged the middle peasant, but stifled, plundered, and ruined him outright. And this is true of all countries without exception, Russia included.

The class-conscious worker's programme is the closest alliance and complete unity with the poor peasants; concessions to and agreement with the middle peasants; ruthless suppression of the kulaks, those blood-suckers, vampires, plunderers of the people and profiteers, who batten on famine. That is the policy of the working class.

Written in the first half  
of August, later than August 6,  
1918

First published January 17 1925  
in *Rabochaya Moskva* No. 14

*Collected Works*, Vol. 28,  
pp. 54-58

---

## LETTER TO AMERICAN WORKERS

Comrades! A Russian Bolshevik who took part in the 1905 Revolution, and who lived in your country for many years afterwards, has offered to convey my letter to you.<sup>302</sup> I have accepted his proposal all the more gladly because just at the present time the American revolutionary workers have to play an exceptionally important role as uncompromising enemies of American imperialism—the freshest, strongest and latest in joining in the world-wide slaughter of nations for the division of capitalist profits. At this very moment, the American multimillionaires, these modern slaveowners, have turned an exceptionally tragic page in the bloody history of bloody imperialism by giving their approval—whether direct or indirect, open or hypocritically concealed, makes no difference—to the armed expedition launched by the brutal Anglo-Japanese imperialists for the purpose of throttling the first socialist republic.

The history of modern, civilised America opened with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few compared to the vast number of wars of conquest which, like the present imperialist war, were caused by squabbles among kings, landowners or capitalists over the division of usurped lands or ill-gotten gains. That was the war the American people waged against the British robbers who oppressed America and held her in colonial slavery, in the same way as these “civilised” blood-suckers are still oppressing and holding in colonial slavery hundreds of millions of people in India, Egypt, and all parts of the world.

About 150 years have passed since then. Bourgeois civilisation has borne all its luxurious fruits. America has taken first place among the free and educated nations in level of development of the productive forces of collective human endeavour, in the utilisation of machinery and of all the wonders of modern engineer-

ing. At the same time, America has become one of the foremost countries in regard to the depth of the abyss which lies between the handful of arrogant multimillionaires who wallow in filth and luxury, and the millions of working people who constantly live on the verge of pauperism. The American people, who set the world an example in waging a revolutionary war against feudal slavery, now find themselves in the latest, capitalist stage of wage-slavery to a handful of multimillionaires, and find themselves playing the role of hired thugs who, for the benefit of wealthy scoundrels, throttled the Philippines in 1898 on the pretext of "liberating" them,<sup>303</sup> and are throttling the Russian Socialist Republic in 1918 on the pretext of "protecting" it from the Germans.

The four years of the imperialist slaughter of nations, however, have not passed in vain. The deception of the people by the scoundrels of both robber groups, the British and the German, has been utterly exposed by indisputable and obvious facts. The results of the four years of war have revealed the general law of capitalism as applied to war between robbers for the division of spoils: the richest and strongest profited and grabbed most, while the weakest were utterly robbed, tormented, crushed and strangled.

The British imperialist robbers were the strongest in number of "colonial slaves". The British capitalists have not lost an inch of "their" territory (i.e., territory they have grabbed over the centuries), but they have grabbed all the German colonies in Africa, they have grabbed Mesopotamia and Palestine, they have throttled Greece, and have begun to plunder Russia.

The German imperialist robbers were the strongest in organisation and discipline of "their" armies, but weaker in regard to colonies. They have lost all their colonies, but plundered half of Europe and throttled the largest number of small countries and weak nations. What a great war of "liberation" on both sides! How well the robbers of both groups, the Anglo-French and the German capitalists, together with their lackeys, the social-chauvinists, i.e., the socialists who went over to the side of "*their own*" bourgeoisie, have "defended their country"!

The American multimillionaires were, perhaps, richest of all, and geographically the most secure. They have profited more than all the rest. They have converted all, even the richest, countries into their tributaries. They have grabbed hundreds of billions of dollars. And every dollar is sullied with filth: the filth of the secret treaties between Britain and her "allies", between Germany and her vassals, treaties for the division of the spoils, treaties of mutual "aid" for oppressing the workers and persecuting the internationalist socialists. Every dollar is sullied with the filth of "profitable" war contracts, which in every country made the rich richer and the poor poorer. And every dollar is stained with

blood—from that ocean of blood that has been shed by the ten million killed and twenty million maimed in the great, noble, liberating and holy war to decide whether the British or the German robbers are to get most of the spoils, whether the British or the German thugs are to be *foremost* in throttling the weak nations all over the world.

While the German robbers broke all records in war atrocities, the British have broken all records not only in the number of colonies they have grabbed, but also in the subtlety of their disgusting hypocrisy. This very day, the Anglo-French and American bourgeois newspapers are spreading, in millions and millions of copies, lies and slander about Russia, and are hypocritically justifying their predatory expedition against her on the plea that they want to “protect” Russia from the Germans!

It does not require many words to refute this despicable and hideous lie; it is sufficient to point to one well-known fact. In October 1917, after the Russian workers had overthrown their imperialist government, the Soviet government, the government of the revolutionary workers and peasants, openly proposed a just peace, a peace without annexations or indemnities, a peace that fully guaranteed equal rights to all nations—and it proposed such a peace to *all* the belligerent countries.

It was the Anglo-French and the American bourgeoisie who refused to accept our proposal; it was they who even refused to talk to us about a general peace! It was *they* who betrayed the interests of all nations; it was they who prolonged the imperialist slaughter!

It was they who, banking on the possibility of dragging Russia back into the imperialist war, refused to take part in the peace negotiations and thereby gave a free hand to the no less predatory German capitalists who imposed the annexationist and harsh Brest Peace upon Russia!

It is difficult to imagine anything more disgusting than the hypocrisy with which the Anglo-French and American bourgeoisie are now “blaming” us *for* the Brest Peace Treaty. The very capitalists of those countries which could have turned the Brest negotiations into general negotiations for a general peace are now our “accusers”! The Anglo-French imperialist vultures, who have profited from the plunder of colonies and the slaughter of nations, have prolonged the war for nearly a whole year after Brest, and yet they “accuse” *us*, the Bolsheviks, who proposed a just peace to all countries, they accuse *us*, who tore up, published and exposed to public disgrace the secret, criminal treaties concluded between the ex-tsar and the Anglo-French capitalists.

The workers of the whole world, no matter in what country they live, greet us, sympathise with us, applaud us for breaking

the iron ring of imperialist ties, of sordid imperialist treaties, of imperialist chains—for breaking through to freedom, and making the heaviest sacrifices in doing so—for, as a socialist republic, although torn and plundered by the imperialists, keeping *out* of the imperialist war and raising the banner of peace, the banner of socialism for the whole world to see.

Small wonder that the international imperialist gang hates us for this, that it “accuses” us, that all the lackeys of the imperialists, including our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, also “accuse” us. The hatred these watchdogs of imperialism express for the Bolsheviks, and the sympathy of the class-conscious workers of the world, convince us more than ever of the justice of our cause.

A real socialist would not fail to understand that for the sake of achieving victory over the bourgeoisie, for the sake of power passing to the workers, for the sake of *starting* the world proletarian revolution, we *cannot* and must *not* hesitate to make the heaviest sacrifices, including the sacrifice of part of our territory, the sacrifice of heavy defeats at the hands of imperialism. A real socialist would have proved by *deeds* his willingness for “his” country to make the greatest sacrifice to give a real push forward to the cause of the socialist revolution.

For the sake of “their” cause, that is, for the sake of winning world hegemony, the imperialists of Britain and Germany have not hesitated to utterly ruin and throttle a whole number of countries, from Belgium and Serbia to Palestine and Mesopotamia. But must socialists wait with “their” cause, the cause of liberating the working people of the whole world from the yoke of capital, of winning universal and lasting peace, until a path without sacrifice is found? Must they fear to open the battle until an easy victory is “guaranteed”? Must they place the integrity and security of “their” bourgeois-created “fatherland” above the interests of the world socialist revolution? The scoundrels in the international socialist movement who think this way, those lackeys who grovel to bourgeois morality, thrice stand condemned.

The Anglo-French and American imperialist vultures “accuse” us of concluding an “agreement” with German imperialism. What hypocrites, what scoundrels they are to slander the workers’ government while trembling because of the sympathy displayed towards us by the workers of “their own” countries! But their hypocrisy will be exposed. They pretend not to see the difference between an agreement entered into by “socialists” with the bourgeoisie (their own or foreign) *against the workers*, against the working people, and an agreement entered into *for the protection* of the workers who have defeated their bourgeoisie, with the bourgeoisie of one national colour *against the bourgeoisie* of another

colour in order that the proletariat may take advantage of the antagonisms between the different groups of bourgeoisie.

In actual fact, every European sees this difference very well, and, as I shall show in a moment, the American people have had a particularly striking "illustration" of it in their own history. There are agreements and agreements, there are *fagots et fagots*, as the French say.

When in February 1918 the German imperialist vultures hurled their forces against unarmed, demobilised Russia, who had relied on the international solidarity of the proletariat before the world revolution had fully matured, I did not hesitate for a moment to enter into an "agreement" with the French monarchists. Captain Sadoul, a French army officer, who, in words, sympathised with the Bolsheviks, but was in deeds a loyal and faithful servant of French imperialism, brought the French officer de Lubersac to see me. "I am a monarchist. My only aim is to secure the defeat of Germany," de Lubersac declared to me. "That goes without saying (*cela va sans dire*)," I replied. But this did not in the least prevent me from entering into an "agreement" with de Lubersac concerning certain services that French army officers, experts in explosives, were ready to render us by blowing up railway lines in order to hinder the German invasion. This is an example of an "agreement" of which every class-conscious worker will approve, an agreement in the interests of socialism. The French monarchist and I shook hands, although we knew that each of us would willingly hang his "partner". But for a time our interests coincided. Against the advancing rapacious Germans, *we*, in the interests of the Russian and the world socialist revolution, utilised the equally rapacious counter-interests of *other* imperialists. In this way we served the interests of the working class of Russia and of other countries, we strengthened the proletariat and weakened the bourgeoisie of the whole world, we resorted to the methods, most legitimate and essential in *every* war, of manoeuvre, stratagem, retreat, in anticipation of the moment when the rapidly maturing proletarian revolution in a number of advanced countries *completely matured*.

However much the Anglo-French and American imperialist sharks fume with rage, however much they slander us, no matter how many millions they spend on bribing the Right Socialist-Revolutionary, Menshevik and other social-patriotic newspapers, *I shall not hesitate one second* to enter into a *similar* "agreement" with the German imperialist vultures if an attack upon Russia by Anglo-French troops calls for it. And I know perfectly well that my tactics will be approved by the class-conscious proletariat of Russia, Germany, France, Britain, America—in short, of the whole civilised world. Such tactics will ease the task of the socialist revo-



lution, will hasten it, will weaken the international bourgeoisie, will strengthen the position of the working class which is defeating the bourgeoisie.

The American people resorted to these tactics long ago to the advantage of their revolution. When they waged their great war of liberation against the British oppressors, they had also against them the French and the Spanish oppressors who owned a part of what is now the United States of North America. In their arduous war for freedom, the American people also entered into "agreements" with some oppressors against others for the purpose of weakening the oppressors and strengthening those who were fighting in a revolutionary manner against oppression, for the purpose of serving the interests of the oppressed *people*. The American people took advantage of the strife between the French, the Spanish and the British; sometimes they even fought side by side with the forces of the French and Spanish oppressors against the British oppressors; first they defeated the British and then freed themselves (partly by ransom) from the French and the Spanish.

Historical action is not the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt, said the great Russian revolutionary Chernyshevsky. A revolutionary would not "agree" to a proletarian revolution only "on the condition" that it proceeds easily and smoothly, that there is, from the outset, combined action on the part of the proletarians of different countries, that there are guarantees against defeats, that the road of the revolution is broad, free and straight, that it will not be necessary during the march to victory to sustain the heaviest casualties, to "bide one's time in a besieged fortress", or to make one's way along extremely narrow, impassable, winding and dangerous mountain tracks. Such a person is no revolutionary, he has not freed himself from the pedantry of the bourgeois intellectuals; such a person will be found constantly slipping into the camp of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, like our Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and even (although more rarely) Left Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Echoing the bourgeoisie, these gentlemen like to blame us for "chaos" of the revolution, for the "destruction" of industry, for the unemployment and the food shortage. How hypocritical these accusations are, coming from those who welcomed and supported the imperialist war, or who entered into an "agreement" with Kerensky who continued this war! It is this imperialist war that is the cause of all these misfortunes. The revolution engendered by the war cannot avoid the terrible difficulties and suffering bequeathed it by the prolonged, ruinous, reactionary slaughter of the nations. To blame us for the "destruction" of industry, or for the "terror", is either hypocrisy or dull-witted pedantry; it reveals an inability to understand the basic conditions of the fierce class

struggle, raised to the highest degree of intensity, that is called revolution.

Even when "accusers" of this type do "recognise" the class struggle, they limit themselves to verbal recognition; actually, they constantly slip into the philistine utopia of class "agreement" and "collaboration"; for in revolutionary epochs the class struggle has always, inevitably, and in every country, assumed the form of *civil war*, and civil war is inconceivable without the severest destruction, terror and the restriction of formal democracy in the interests of this war. Only unctuous parsons—whether Christian or "secular" in the persons of parlour, parliamentary socialists—cannot see, understand and feel this necessity. Only a lifeless "man in the muffler" can shun the revolution for this reason instead of plunging into battle with the utmost ardour and determination at a time when history demands that the greatest problems of humanity be solved by struggle and war.

The American people have a revolutionary tradition which has been adopted by the best representatives of the American proletariat, who have repeatedly expressed their complete solidarity with us Bolsheviks. That tradition is the war of liberation against the British in the eighteenth century and the Civil War in the nineteenth century. In some respects, if we only take into consideration the "destruction" of some branches of industry and of the national economy, America in 1870 was *behind* 1860. But what a pedant, what an idiot would anyone be to deny on *these* grounds the immense, world-historic, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1863-65!

The representatives of the bourgeoisie understand that for the sake of overthrowing Negro slavery, of overthrowing the rule of the slaveowners, it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, through the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror that accompany every war. But now, when we are confronted with the vastly greater task of overthrowing capitalist *wage-slavery*, of overthrowing the rule of the bourgeoisie—now, the representatives and defenders of the bourgeoisie, and also the reformist socialists who have been frightened by the bourgeoisie and are shunning the revolution, cannot and do not want to understand that civil war is necessary and legitimate.

The American workers will not follow the bourgeoisie. They will be with us, for civil war against the bourgeoisie. The whole history of the world and of the American labour movement strengthens my conviction that this is so. I also recall the words of one of the most beloved leaders of the American proletariat, Eugene Debs, who wrote in the *Appeal to Reason*,<sup>304</sup> I believe towards the end of 1915, in the article "What Shall I Fight For" (I quoted this article at the beginning of 1916 at a public meeting of workers in

Berne, Switzerland\*)—that he, Debs, would rather be shot than vote credits for the present criminal and reactionary war; that he, Debs, knows of only one holy and, from the proletarian standpoint, legitimate war, namely: the war against the capitalists, the war to liberate mankind from wage-slavery.

I am not surprised that Wilson, the head of the American multimillionaires and servant of the capitalist sharks, has thrown Debs into prison. Let the bourgeoisie be brutal to the true internationalists, to the true representatives of the revolutionary proletariat! The more fierce and brutal they are, the nearer the day of the victorious proletarian revolution.

We are blamed for the destruction caused by our revolution. . . . Who are the accusers? The hangers-on of the bourgeoisie, of that very bourgeoisie who, during the four years of the imperialist war, have destroyed almost the whole of European culture and have reduced Europe to barbarism, brutality and starvation. These bourgeoisie now demand we should not make a revolution on these ruins, amidst this wreckage of culture, amidst the wreckage and ruins created by the war, nor with the people who have been brutalised by the war. How humane and righteous the bourgeoisie are!

Their servants accuse us of resorting to terror. . . . The British bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1649, the French bourgeoisie have forgotten their 1793. Terror was just and legitimate when the bourgeoisie resorted to it for their own benefit against feudalism. Terror became monstrous and criminal when the workers and poor peasants dared to use it against the bourgeoisie! Terror was just and legitimate when used for the purpose of substituting one exploiting minority for another exploiting minority. Terror became monstrous and criminal when it began to be used for the purpose of overthrowing *every* exploiting minority, to be used in the interests of the vast actual majority, in the interests of the proletariat and semi-proletariat, the working class and the poor peasants!

The international imperialist bourgeoisie have slaughtered ten million men and maimed twenty million in "their" war, the war to decide whether the British or the German vultures are to rule the world.

If *our* war, the war of the oppressed and exploited against the oppressors and the exploiters, results in half a million or a million casualties in all countries, the bourgeoisie will say that the former casualties are justified, while the latter are criminal.

The proletariat will have something entirely different to say.

Now, amidst the horrors of the imperialist war, the proletariat is receiving a most vivid and striking illustration of the great truth

taught by all revolutions and bequeathed to the workers by their best teachers, the founders of modern socialism. This truth is that no revolution can be successful unless *the resistance of the exploiters is crushed*. When we, the workers and toiling peasants, captured state power, it became our duty to crush the resistance of the exploiters. We are proud we have been doing this. We regret we are not doing it with sufficient firmness and determination.

We know that fierce resistance to the socialist revolution on the part of the bourgeoisie is inevitable in all countries, and that this resistance will *grow* with the growth of this revolution. The proletariat will crush this resistance; during the struggle against the resisting bourgeoisie it will finally mature for victory and for power.

Let the corrupt bourgeois press shout to the whole world about every mistake our revolution makes. We are not daunted by our mistakes. People have not become saints because the revolution has begun. The toiling classes who for centuries have been oppressed, downtrodden and forcibly held in the vice of poverty, brutality and ignorance cannot avoid mistakes when making a revolution. And, as I pointed out once before, the corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried.\* The corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying.

For every hundred mistakes we commit, and which the bourgeoisie and their lackeys (including our own Mensheviks and Right Socialist-Revolutionaries) shout about to the whole world, 10,000 great and heroic deeds are performed, greater and more heroic because they are simple and inconspicuous amidst the everyday life of a factory district or a remote village, performed by people who are not accustomed (and have no opportunity) to shout to the whole world about their successes.

But even if the contrary were true—although I know such an assumption is wrong—even if we committed 10,000 mistakes for every 100 correct actions we performed, even in that case our revolution would be great and invincible, and *so it will be in the eyes of world history*, because, *for the first time*, not the minority, not the rich alone, not the educated alone, but the real people, the vast majority of the working people, are *themselves* building a new life, are *by their own experience* solving the most difficult problems of socialist organisation.

Every mistake committed in the course of such work, in the course of this most conscientious and earnest work of tens of mil-

lions of simple workers and peasants in reorganising their whole life, every such mistake is worth thousands and millions of "flawless" successes achieved by the exploiting minority—successes in swindling and duping the working people. For only *through* such mistakes will the workers and peasants *learn* to build the new life, learn to do *without* capitalists; only in this way will they hack a path for themselves—through thousands of obstacles—to victorious socialism.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our peasants, who at one stroke, in one night, October 25-26 (old style), 1917, entirely abolished the private ownership of land, and are now, month after month, overcoming tremendous difficulties and correcting their mistakes themselves, solving in a practical way the most difficult tasks of organising new conditions of economic life, of fighting the kulaks, providing land for the *working people* (and not for the rich), and of changing to *communist* large-scale agriculture.

Mistakes are being committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our workers, who have already, after a few months, nationalised almost all the biggest factories and plants, and are learning by hard, everyday work the new task of managing whole branches of industry, are setting the nationalised enterprises going, overcoming the powerful resistance of inertia, petty-bourgeois mentality and selfishness, and, brick by brick, are laying the foundation of *new* social ties, of a *new* labour discipline, of a *new* influence of the workers' trade unions over their members.

Mistakes are committed in the course of their revolutionary work by our Soviets, which were created as far back as 1905 by a mighty upsurge of the people. The Soviets of Workers and Peasants are a new *type* of state, a new and higher *type* of democracy, a form of the proletarian dictatorship, a means of administering the state *without* the bourgeoisie and *against* the bourgeoisie. For the first time democracy is here serving the people, the working people, and has ceased to be democracy for the rich as it still is in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic. For the first time, the people are grappling, on a scale involving one hundred million, with the problem of implementing the dictatorship of the proletariat and semi-proletariat—a problem which, if not solved, makes socialism *out of the question*.

Let the pedants, or the people whose minds are incurably stuffed with bourgeois-democratic or parliamentary prejudices, shake their heads in perplexity about our Soviets, about the absence of direct elections, for example. These people have forgotten nothing and have learned nothing during the period of the great upheavals of 1914-18. The combination of the proletarian dictatorship with the new democracy for the working people—of civil war with the

widest participation of the people in politics—such a combination cannot be brought about at one stroke, nor does it fit in with the outworn modes of routine parliamentary democracy. The contours of a new world, the world of socialism, are rising before us in the shape of the Soviet Republic. It is not surprising that this world does not come into being ready-made, does not spring forth like Minerva from the head of Jupiter.<sup>305</sup>

The old bourgeois-democratic constitutions waxed eloquent about formal equality and right of assembly; but our proletarian and peasant Soviet Constitution casts aside the hypocrisy of formal equality. When the bourgeois republicans overturned thrones they did not worry about formal equality between monarchists and republicans. When it is a matter of overthrowing the bourgeoisie, only traitors or idiots can demand formal equality of rights for the bourgeoisie. "Freedom of assembly" for workers and peasants is not worth a farthing when the best buildings belong to the bourgeoisie. Our Soviets have *confiscated* all the good buildings in town and country from the rich and have *transferred all* of them to the workers and peasants for *their* unions and meetings. This is *our* freedom of assembly—for the working people! This is the meaning and content of our Soviet, our socialist Constitution!

That is why we are all so firmly convinced that no matter what misfortunes may still be in store for it, our Republic of Soviets is *invincible*.

It is invincible because every blow struck by frenzied imperialism, every defeat the international bourgeoisie inflict on us, rouses more and more sections of the workers and peasants to the struggle, teaches them at the cost of enormous sacrifice, steels them and engenders new heroism on a mass scale.

We know that help from you will probably not come soon, comrade American workers, for the revolution is developing in different countries in different forms and at different tempos (and it cannot be otherwise). We know that although the European proletarian revolution has been maturing very rapidly lately, it may, after all, not flare up within the next few weeks. We are banking on the inevitability of the world revolution, but this does not mean that we are such fools as to bank on the revolution inevitably coming on a *definite* and early date. We have seen two great revolutions in our country, 1905 and 1917, and we know revolutions are not made to order, or by agreement. We know that circumstances brought *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to the fore not because of our merits, but because of the exceptional backwardness of Russia, and that *before* the world revolution breaks out a number of separate revolutions may be defeated.

In spite of this, we are firmly convinced that we are invincible, because the spirit of mankind will not be broken by the imperial-

ist slaughter. Mankind will vanquish it. And the first country to *break* the convict chains of the imperialist war was *our* country. We sustained enormously heavy casualties in the struggle to break these chains, but we *broke* them. We are *free from* imperialist dependence, we have raised the banner of struggle for the complete overthrow of imperialism for the whole world to see.

We are now, as it were, in a besieged fortress, waiting for the other detachments of the world socialist revolution to come to our relief. These detachments *exist*, they are *more numerous* than ours, they are maturing, growing, gaining more strength the longer the brutalities of imperialism continue. The workers are breaking away from their social-traitors—the Gomperses, Hendersons, Renaudels, Scheidemanns and Renners. Slowly but surely the workers are adopting communist, Bolshevik tactics and are marching towards the proletarian revolution, which alone is capable of saving dying culture and dying mankind.

In short, we are invincible, because the world proletarian revolution is invincible.

*N. Lenin*

August 20, 1918

---

**JOINT SESSION OF THE ALL-RUSSIA  
CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,  
THE MOSCOW SOVIET,  
FACTORY COMMITTEES AND TRADE UNIONS**

**OCTOBER 22, 1918<sup>304</sup>**

**RESOLUTION**

The proletarian and peasant revolutionary movement against the imperialist war has recently had tremendous successes in all countries, especially in the Balkans, Austria and Germany. These successes, however, have particularly embittered the international bourgeoisie, now headed by the Anglo-American and French bourgeoisie, and have forced them to make hasty efforts to organise themselves as a counter-revolutionary force for crushing the revolution and, above all, for crushing Soviet power in Russia, which is the chief hotbed of revolution at present.

The German bourgeoisie and the German Government, defeated in the war and threatened by a mighty revolutionary movement from within, are threshing about in their search for salvation. One trend in the ruling circles of Germany still hopes by delays to gain time before the winter and to prepare for the country's military defence on a new line of fortifications. Another trend is feverishly seeking agreement with the Anglo-French bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat and the Bolsheviks. Since this trend is running up against the flat refusal of the victors, the Anglo-French imperialists, to strike a bargain, it is trying to frighten them with the Bolshevik danger and bribe them by offering its services against the Bolsheviks, against the proletarian revolution.

The bourgeoisie of the countries subordinated to Germany or occupied by her are still more eagerly seeking agreement with the Entente, especially in those cases—as, for example, in Finland, the Ukraine, etc.—where they are aware that it is completely impossible for them to maintain power over the exploited working people without the aid of foreign bayonets.

Owing to these circumstances, Soviet power finds itself in the following peculiar situation: on the one hand, we have never been so close to an international proletarian revolution as we are now;



on the other hand, we have never been in such a perilous position as we are now. There are no longer two approximately equal groups of imperialist plunderers, devouring and weakening each other. There remains a single group of victors, the Anglo-French imperialists, which intends to divide the whole world among the capitalists. It intends to overthrow Soviet power in Russia at all costs and replace it by bourgeois power. It is preparing now to attack Russia from the South, through the Dardanelles and the Black Sea, for example, or through Bulgaria and Rumania. Moreover, at least a part of the Anglo-French imperialists evidently hope that the German Government, by a direct or tacit agreement with them, will withdraw its troops from the Ukraine only as the latter becomes occupied by Anglo-French troops, so as not to allow the otherwise inevitable victory of the Ukrainian workers and peasants and their establishment of a Ukrainian workers' and peasants' government.

Behind the back of the Krasnov and whiteguard counter-revolutionaries, preparations are being made for an attack against us by a much more dangerous force, the force of the international counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, with the Anglo-American and French bourgeoisie in first place. This is a fact that is not realised everywhere and the awareness of which has not penetrated deep down among the broad mass of the workers and peasants. We must therefore tirelessly imbue this awareness in the people. The most assiduous attention must be devoted to strengthening the Southern Front and establishing and arming an incomparably mightier Red Army than we have now. Every workers' organisation, every union of poor peasants, every Soviet institution must again and again give priority to the question of strengthening the army, and repeatedly re-examine whether we have done enough, and what new measures we could and should undertake.

A marked change has taken place in the mood of our workers and peasants. The people have overcome their extreme war-weariness. An army is being created and has been created. A new, communist discipline, a class-conscious discipline of the working people, has developed. And this fact gives us every reason to confidently expect that we can and will defend our socialist homeland and secure the victory of the international proletarian revolution.

---

## THE VALUABLE ADMISSIONS OF PITIRIM SOROKIN

*Pravda* today carries a remarkably interesting letter by Pitirim Sorokin, to which the special attention of all Communists should be drawn. In this letter, which was originally published in *Izvestia of the North Dvina Executive Committee*,<sup>307</sup> Pitirim Sorokin announces that he is leaving the Right Socialist-Revolutionary Party and relinquishing his seat in the Constituent Assembly. His motives are that he finds it difficult to provide effective political recipes, not only for others, but even for himself, and that therefore he "is withdrawing completely from politics". He writes. "The past year of revolution has taught me one truth: politicians may make mistakes, politics may be socially useful, but may also be socially harmful, whereas scientific and educational work is always useful and is always needed by the people. . . ." The letter is signed: "Pitirim Sorokin, lecturer at St. Petersburg University and the Psycho-Neurological Institute, former member of the Constituent Assembly and former member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party".

This letter is worth mentioning in the first place because it is an extremely interesting "human document". We do not often meet such sincerity and frankness as are displayed by Sorokin in admitting the mistakenness of his politics. In practically the majority of cases politicians who become convinced that the line they have been pursuing is erroneous try to conceal their change of front, to hush it up, to "invent" more or less extraneous motives, and so on. A frank and honest admission of one's political error is in itself an important political act. Pitirim Sorokin is wrong when he says that scientific work "is always useful". For mistakes are made in this sphere too, and there are examples also in Russian literature of the obstinate advocacy of, for instance, reactionary philosophical views by people who are not conscious reactionaries. On the other hand, a frank declaration by a prominent

person—i.e., a person who has occupied a responsible political post known to the people at large—that he is withdrawing from politics *is also politics*. An honest confession of a political error may be of great political benefit to many people if the error was shared by whole parties which at one time enjoyed influence over the people.

The political significance of Pitirim Sorokin's letter is very great precisely at the present moment. It is a "lesson" which we should all seriously think over and learn thoroughly.

It is a truth long known to every Marxist that in every capitalist society the only *decisive* forces are the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, while all social elements occupying a position between these classes and coming within the economic category of the petty bourgeoisie *inevitably* vacillate between these decisive forces. But there is an enormous gulf between academic recognition of this truth and the ability to draw the conclusions that follow from it in the complex conditions of practical reality.

Pitirim Sorokin is representative of the Menshevik-Socialist-Revolutionary trend, an extremely broad public and political trend. That this is a single trend, that the difference between the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries in their attitude towards the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is insignificant, is especially convincingly and strikingly borne out by the events in the Russian revolution since February 1917. The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries are varieties of petty-bourgeois democrats—that is the economic essence and fundamental political characteristic of the trend in question. We know from the history of the advanced countries how frequently this trend in its early stages assumes a "socialist" hue.

What was it that several months ago so forcibly repelled those of this trend from the Bolsheviks, from the proletarian revolution, and what is it that is now inducing them to shift from hostility to neutrality? It is quite obvious that the cause of this shift was, firstly, the collapse of German imperialism in connection with the revolution in Germany and other countries, and the exposure of Anglo-French imperialism, and, secondly, the dispelling of bourgeois-democratic illusions.

Let us deal with the first cause. Patriotism is one of the most deeply ingrained sentiments, inculcated by the existence of separate fatherlands for hundreds and thousands of years. One of the most pronounced, one might say exceptional, difficulties of our proletarian revolution is that it was obliged to pass through a phase of extreme departure from patriotism, the phase of the Brest-Litovsk Peace. The bitterness, resentment, and violent indignation provoked by this peace were easy to understand and it goes without saying that we Marxists could expect only the class-con-

scious vanguard of the proletariat to appreciate the truth that we were making and were obliged to make great national sacrifices for the sake of the supreme interests of the world proletarian revolution. There was no source from which ideologists who are not Marxists, and the broad mass of the working people, who do not belong to the proletariat trained in the long school of strikes and revolution, could derive either a firm conviction that the revolution was maturing, or an unreserved devotion to it. At best, our tactics appeared to them a fantastic, fanatical, and adventurist sacrifice of the real and most obvious interests of hundreds of millions for the sake of an abstract, utopian, and dubious hope of something that might occur abroad. And the petty bourgeoisie, owing to their economic position, are more patriotic than the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

*But it turned out as we had said.*

German imperialism, which had seemed to be the only enemy, collapsed. The German revolution, which had appeared to be a "dream-farce" (to use Plekhanov's expression), became a fact. Anglo-French imperialism, which the fantasy of the petty-bourgeois democrats had pictured as a friend of democracy and a protector of the oppressed, turned out to be a savage beast which imposed on the German Republic and the people of Austria terms worse than those of Brest, a savage beast which used armies of "free" republicans—French and American—as gendarmes, butchers and throttlers of the independence and freedom of small and weak nations. Anglo-French imperialism was exposed by world history with ruthless thoroughness and frankness. The facts of world history demonstrated to the Russian patriots, who formerly would hear of nothing that was not to the direct advantage (as formerly understood) of their country, that the transformation of our Russian revolution into a socialist revolution was not a dubious venture but a necessity, for *there was no other* alternative: Anglo-French and American imperialism will *inevitably* destroy the independence and freedom of Russia *if* the world socialist revolution, world Bolshevism, does not triumph.

Facts are stubborn things, as the English say. And during recent months we have witnessed facts that signify a most momentous turning-point in world history. These facts are compelling the petty-bourgeois democrats of Russia, in spite of their hatred of Bolshevism, a hatred inculcated by the history of our inner-Party struggle, to turn from hostility to Bolshevism first to neutrality and then to support of Bolshevism. The objective conditions which repelled these democratic patriots from us most strongly have now vanished. The objective conditions existing in the world now *compel* them to turn to us. Pitirim Sorokin's change of front is by no means fortuitous, but rather the symptom of an inevitable

change of front on the part of a *whole class*, of the whole petty-bourgeois democracy. Whoever fails to reckon with this fact and to take advantage of it is a bad socialist, not a Marxist.

Furthermore, faith in "democracy" *in general*, as a universal panacea, and failure to understand that this democracy is *bourgeois* democracy, historically limited in its usefulness and its necessity, have for decades and centuries been particularly characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie of all countries. The big bourgeois is case-hardened; he knows that under capitalism a democratic republic, like every other form of state, is nothing but a machine for the suppression of the proletariat. The big bourgeois *knows* this from his most intimate acquaintance with the real leaders and with the most profound (and therefore frequently the most concealed) springs of *every* bourgeois state machine. The petty bourgeois, owing to his economic position and his conditions of life generally, is less able to appreciate this truth, and even cherishes the illusion that a democratic republic implies "pure democracy", "a free people's state", the non-class or supra-class rule of the people, a pure manifestation of the will of the people, and so on and so forth. The tenacity of these prejudices of the petty-bourgeois democrat is inevitably due to the fact that he is farther removed from the acute class struggle, the stock exchange, and "real" politics; and it would be absolutely un-Marxist to expect these prejudices to be eradicated very rapidly by propaganda alone.

World history, however, is moving with such furious rapidity, is smashing everything customary and established with a hammer of such immense weight, by crises of such unparalleled intensity, that the most tenacious prejudices are giving way. The naive belief in a Constituent Assembly and the naive habit of contrasting "pure democracy" with "proletarian dictatorship" took shape naturally and inevitably in the mind of the "democrat in general". But the experiences of the Constituent Assembly supporters in Archangel, Samara, Siberia and the South could not but destroy even the most tenacious of prejudices. The idealised democratic republic of Wilson *proved* in practice to be a form of the most rabid imperialism, of the most shameless oppression and suppression of weak and small nations. The average "democrat" in general, the Menshevik and the Socialist-Revolutionary, thought: "How can we even dream of some allegedly superior type of state, some Soviet government? God grant us even an ordinary democratic republic!" And, of course, in "ordinary", comparatively peaceful times he could have kept on cherishing this "hope" for many a decade.

Now, however, the course of world events and the bitter lessons derived from the alliance of all the Russian monarchists with

*Anglo-French and American imperialism are proving in practice that a democratic republic is a bourgeois-democratic republic, which is already out of date from the point of view of the problems which imperialism has placed before history. They show that there is no other alternative: either Soviet government triumphs in every advanced country in the world, or the most reactionary imperialism triumphs, the most savage imperialism, which is throttling the small and weak nations and reinstating reaction all over the world—Anglo-American imperialism, which has perfectly mastered the art of using the form of a democratic republic.*

One or the other.

There is no middle course. Until quite recently this view was regarded as the blind fanaticism of the Bolsheviks.

*But it turned out to be true.*

If Pitirim Sorokin has relinquished his seat in the Constituent Assembly, it is not without reason; it is a symptom of a change of front on the part of a whole class, the petty-bourgeois democrats. A split among them is inevitable: one section will come over to our side, another section will remain neutral, while a third will deliberately join forces with the monarchist Constitutional-Democrats, who are selling Russia to Anglo-American capital and seeking to crush the revolution with the aid of foreign bayonets. One of the most urgent tasks of the present day is to take into account and make use of the turn among the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary democrats from hostility to Bolshevism first to neutrality and then to support of Bolshevism.

Every slogan the Party addresses to the people is bound to become petrified, become a dead letter, yet remain valid for many even when the conditions which rendered it necessary have changed. That is an unavoidable evil, and it is impossible to ensure the correctness of Party policy unless we learn to combat and overcome it. The period of our proletarian revolution in which the differences with the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary democrats were particularly acute was a historically necessary period. It was impossible to avoid waging a vigorous struggle against these democrats when they swung to the camp of our enemies and set about restoring a *bourgeois and imperialist* democratic republic. Many of the slogans of this struggle have now become frozen and petrified and *prevent* us from properly assessing and taking effective advantage of the new period, in which a change of front has begun among these democrats, a change in our direction, not a fortuitous change, but one rooted deep in the conditions of the international situation.

It is not enough to encourage this change of front and amicably greet those who are making it. A politician who knows what he is working for must learn to *bring about* this change of front

among the various sections and groups of the broad mass of petty-bourgeois democrats if he is convinced that serious and deep-going historical reasons for such a turn exist. A revolutionary proletarian must know whom to suppress and with whom—and when and how—to conclude an agreement. It would be ridiculous and foolish to refrain from employing terror against and suppressing the landowners and capitalists and their henchmen, who are selling Russia to the foreign imperialist "Allies". It would be farcical to attempt to "convince" or generally to "psychologically influence" them. But it would be equally foolish and ridiculous—if not more so—to insist only on tactics of suppression and terror in relation to the petty-bourgeois democrats when the course of events is compelling them to turn in our direction.

The proletariat encounters these democrats everywhere. Our task in the rural districts is to destroy the landowner and smash the resistance of the exploiter and the kulak profiteer. For this purpose we can safely rely *only* on the semi-proletarians, the "poor peasants". But the middle peasant is not our enemy. He wavered, is wavering, and will continue to waver. The task of influencing the waverers is *not identical* with the task of overthrowing the exploiter and defeating the active enemy. The task at the present moment is to come to an agreement with the middle peasant—while not for a moment renouncing the struggle against the kulak and at the same time firmly relying solely on the poor peasant—for a turn in our direction on the part of the middle peasants is now inevitable owing to the causes enumerated above.

This applies also to the handicraftsman, the artisan, and the worker whose conditions are most petty-bourgeois or whose views are most petty-bourgeois, and to many office workers and army officers, and, in particular, to the intellectuals generally. It is an unquestionable fact that there often are instances in our Party of inability to make use of this change of front among them and that this inability can and must be overcome.

We already have the firm support of the vast majority of the proletarians organised in the trade unions. We must know how to win over the least proletarian and most petty-bourgeois sections of the *working people* who are turning towards us, to include them in the general organisation and to subject them to general proletarian discipline. The slogan of the moment here is not to fight these sections, but to win them over, to be able to influence them, to convince the waverers, to make use of those who are neutral, and, by mass proletarian influence, to educate those who are lagging behind or who have only very recently begun to free themselves from "Constituent Assembly" or "patriotic-democratic" illusions.

We already have sufficiently firm support among the working people. This was quite strikingly borne out by the Sixth Congress

of Soviets.<sup>308</sup> We are not afraid of the bourgeois intellectuals, but we shall not for a moment relax the struggle against the deliberate saboteurs and whiteguards among them. But the slogan of the moment is to make use of the change of attitude towards us which is taking place among them. There still remain plenty of the worst bourgeois specialists who have wormed themselves into Soviet positions. To throw them out, to replace them by specialists who yesterday were our convinced enemies and today are only neutral is one of the most important tasks of the present moment, the task of every active Soviet functionary who comes into contact with the "specialists", of every agitator, propagandist, and organiser.

Of course, like every other political action in a complex and rapidly changing situation, agreement with the middle peasant, with the worker who was a Menshevik yesterday and with the office worker or specialist who was a saboteur yesterday, takes skill to achieve. The whole point is not to rest content with the skill we have acquired by previous experience, but *under all circumstances to go on, under all circumstances to strive for something bigger*, under all circumstances to proceed from simpler to more difficult tasks. Otherwisc, no progress whatever is possible and in particular no progress is possible in socialist construction.

The other day I was visited by representatives from a congress of delegates of credit co-operative societies. They showed me the congress resolution<sup>309</sup> protesting *against the merger* of the Credit Co-operative Bank with the People's Bank of the Republic. I told them that I stood for agreement with the middle peasants and highly valued even the beginnings of a change in attitude from hostility to neutrality towards the Bolsheviks on the part of the co-operators, but the basis for an agreement could be created only by their consent to the complete merger of their special bank with the single Bank of the Republic. The congress delegates thereupon replaced their resolution by another, which they had the congress adopt, and in which everything hostile to the merger was deleted; *but . . . but* what they proposed was a plan for a *special* "credit union" of co-operators, which in fact differed in no way from a special bank! That was ridiculous. Only a fool, of course, will be deceived by such verbiage. But the "failure" of one such . . . "attempt" will not affect our policy in the least; we have pursued and will pursue a policy of agreement with the co-operators, the middle peasants, at the same time suppressing every attempt to change the *policy* of the Soviet government and of Soviet socialist construction.

Vacillation on the part of the petty-bourgeois democrats is inevitable. It was enough for the Czechs to win a few victories for these democrats to fall into a panic, to begin to spread panic, to hasten to the side of the "victors" and be ready to greet them in a servile manner. Of course, it must not be forgotten for a moment



that now, too, any partial success of, let us say, the Anglo-American-Krasnov whiteguards would be enough for vacillation to begin in the other direction, increasing panic and multiplying cases of the dissemination of panic, of treachery, and desertion to the imperialists, and so on and so forth.

We are aware of that. We shall not forget it. The purely proletarian basis we have won for the Soviet government, which is supported by the semi-proletarians, will remain firm and enduring. Our ranks will not falter, our army will not waver—that we already know from experience. But when profound world-historic changes bring about an inevitable turn in our direction among the mass of non-Party, Menshevik, and Socialist-Revolutionary democrats, we must learn and shall learn to make use of this change of front, to encourage it, to induce it among the various groups and sections of the population, to do everything possible to reach agreement with them and thus facilitate the work of socialist construction and ease the burden of grievous economic dislocation, ignorance, and incompetence which are delaying the victory of socialism

Written No 20 1918

Published November 21 1918  
in *Pravda* No 232  
Signed *N. Lenin*

*Collected Works* Vol 28,  
pp 18, 94



**NOTES**  
**INDEXES**



## NOTES\*

The first four "Letters From Afar" were written by Lenin from March 7 to 12 (20 to 25); the fifth, unfinished, was written on the eve of Lenin's departure from Switzerland to Russia, on March 26 (April 8), 1917.

The letters were sent to Petrograd, but only the first was printed in *Pravda* in March 1917. The other four appeared after the October Socialist Revolution. The ideas of the unfinished fifth letter were elaborated by Lenin in his "Letters on Tactics" and "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution" (See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, pp. 42-54, and this volume, pp. 37-65). p. 19

The reference is to the *Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies* which emerged in the early days of the February revolution. Elections to the Soviet began spontaneously at individual factories and within a few days spread to all the factories in the capital. On February 27 (March 12), before the Soviet had assembled for its first sitting, the Menshevik liquidators K. A. Gvozdyov and B. O. Bogdanov, and Duma members N. S. Chkheidze, M. I. Skobelev and others proclaimed themselves the Provisional Executive Committee of the Soviet in an attempt to bring it under their control. At the first sitting the Soviet officially appointed, on the evening of the same day, a Presidium, composed of N. S. Chkheidze, A. F. Kerensky and M. I. Skobelev. Besides the members of the Presidium, the Executive Committee included A. G. Shlyapnikov, N. N. Sukhanov and Y. M. Steklov, and provision was made for the central and the Petrograd committees of the socialist parties to be represented on it. The Socialist-Revolutionaries were at first opposed to the organisation of the Soviet but then sent their representatives to it.

The Soviet proclaimed itself the organ of the workers' and soldiers' deputies, and up to the First Congress of Soviets (June 1917) was in fact an all-Russia centre. On March 1 (14) the Executive Committee was extended to include soldiers' deputies.

Although its leadership was in the hands of conciliators, the Soviet, under pressure from the revolutionary workers and soldiers, took a number of revolutionary measures such as the arrest of tsarist officials and the release of political prisoners. On March 1 (14) the Soviet issued its "Order No. 1 to the Garrison of the Petrograd Military District", which played a very big part in revolutionising the army. Henceforth all military units were to be guided in their political actions by the Soviet, all weapons were to be placed at the disposal and under the control of company and battalion committees, and orders issued by the Provisional Committee of the Duma were to be obeyed only if they did not contradict to the orders of the Soviet, and so on.

But at the crucial moment, during the night following March 1 (14), the conciliators among the Executive Committee of the Soviet voluntarily gave up power to the bourgeoisie: they approved the Provisional Government composed of representatives of the bourgeoisie and landowners. Their capitulation to the bourgeoisie was not known abroad, since newspapers representing views to the left of the Constitutional Democrats' views were not allowed out of the country. Lenin learned of this when he returned to Russia. p. 21

- <sup>3</sup> The *Octobrists*—members of the Union of October Seventeen, a monarchist party of big capitalists founded in November 1905. The name of the party was intended to express its solidarity with the tsar's Manifesto of October 17(30) 1905, which promised to introduce constitutional liberties in Russia. The Octobrists' activities were hostile to the people. They upheld the interests of the big capitalists and the landowners who ran their estates on capitalist lines, and gave their full support to the tsar's home and foreign policy.

After the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917, the Octobrists became the ruling party and actively opposed the maturing socialist revolution in Russia.

After the October Socialist Revolution, the Octobrists fought against Soviet power.

*Cadets*—members of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the chief party of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie in Russia. Founded in October 1905, it was composed of representatives of the bourgeoisie, land-owning Zemstvo leaders and bourgeois intellectuals. Subsequently the Cadets became the party of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

During the First World War the Cadets supported the tsarist government's predatory foreign policy and in the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 they tried to save the monarchy. Holding a leading position in the bourgeois Provisional Government, they pursued an anti-popular and counter-revolutionary policy. After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution they were implacable enemies of Soviet power and participated in all the armed counter-revolutionary actions and foreign intervention campaigns. p. 21

- <sup>4</sup> The *Basle Manifesto* on war was adopted at the emergency International Socialist Congress held in Basle on November 24-25, 1912. The Manifesto warned the peoples against the mounting danger of an imperialist world war, exposed the predatory aims of that war and called on the workers of all countries to fight resolutely for peace and to pit against the might of "capitalist imperialism the might of the international solidarity of the working class". The Basle Manifesto included the clause, formulated by Lenin, from the resolution of the Stuttgart Congress of 1907, that in the event of the outbreak of an imperialist war the socialists should take advantage of the economic and political crisis caused by it and fight for a socialist revolution. p. 22

- <sup>5</sup> The *Commoners (raznochintsi)*—Russian intellectuals drawn from the small townsfolk, the clergy, the merchant classes and the peasantry, as distinct from those drawn from the nobility. p. 22

- <sup>6</sup> The *Mensheviks*—a petty-bourgeois opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic movement. They became known as Mensheviks at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903, when the Social-Democratic Party split into a revolutionary wing led by Lenin and an opportunist wing headed by Martov. During the elections to the Party central bodies the revolu-

tionary Social-Democrats won the majority (*bolshinstvo*), while the opportunists found themselves in the minority (*menshinstvo*); hence the names Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

During the 1905-07 Revolution the Mensheviks opposed the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution and the alliance of the working class with the peasantry, and demanded agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie, who, they held, should lead the revolution. During the years of reaction that followed the defeat of the revolution, most of the Mensheviks became liquidators: they demanded the liquidation of the revolutionary illegal party of the working class. After the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917 they entered the bourgeois Provisional Government, supported its imperialist policy and fought against the socialist revolution which was being prepared by the Bolsheviks.

After the October Socialist Revolution the Mensheviks became an openly counter-revolutionary party, organising and participating in conspiracies and revolts aimed at overthrowing Soviet power.

The *Organising Committee*—the leading Menshevik centre set up at the August 1912 Coalescence of liquidators. During the First World War the Organising Committee adopted a social-chauvinist stand. It functioned up to the election of the Central Committee of the Menshevik Party at the "Unity" Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. (Mensheviks) in August 1917. p. 23

<sup>7</sup> The Right, liquidationist wing of the Mensheviks, so called after its leaders Gvozdyov and Potresov; it pursued a social-chauvinist policy during the First World War. p. 23

<sup>8</sup> The *Party of Peaceful Renovation*—a constitutional-monarchist organisation of the big bourgeoisie and landowners founded in 1906, after the dissolution of the First Duma. Its programme was close to that of the Octobrists. It defended the interests of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie and of the landowners who ran their estates on capitalist lines. In the Third Duma the party united with the so-called Party of Democratic Reforms to form the Progressist group. p. 24

<sup>9</sup> The *Trudoviks* (Trudovik group)—a group of petty-bourgeois democrats—peasants and intellectuals of the Narodnik persuasion—formed in April 1906 by the peasant deputies in the First Duma. There were Trudovik groups in all four Dumas. The Trudoviks wavered between the Cadets and the revolutionary Social-Democrats. After the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917 they actively supported the Provisional Government. They were hostile to October Socialist Revolution. p. 24

<sup>10</sup> The reference is to the *bourgeois Provisional Government* formed on March 2 (15), 1917, by agreement between the Provisional Committee of the Duma and the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik leaders of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Provisional Government was composed of Prince G. Y. Lvov (Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior), the Cadet leader P. N. Milyukov (Minister for Foreign Affairs), the Octobrist leader A. I. Guchkov (Minister of the Army and, for a time, the Navy Minister), and other representatives of the big bourgeoisie and landowners, and the Trudovik A. F. Kerensky (Minister of Justice). p. 24

<sup>11</sup> The *Duma*—a representative body which the tsarist government was compelled to convene as a result of the revolutionary events of 1905. The Duma was formally a legislative body but in fact it had no real power. The elections to the Duma were neither direct, equal, nor universal. The electoral

rights of the working classes and of the non-Russian nationalities inhabiting Russia were greatly curtailed, and a considerable section of the workers and peasants had no electoral rights whatever. The First Duma (April-July 1906) and the Second Duma (February-June 1907) were dissolved by the tsarist government. After its June Third coup d'état in 1907 the government published a new electoral law that still more curtailed the electoral rights of the workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie and ensured the complete domination of the reactionary bloc of landowners and big capitalists in the Third (1907-12) and the Fourth (1912-17) Dumas. p. 24

- <sup>12</sup> The *War Industry Committees* were established in Russia in May 1915 by the capitalists to help the tsarist government in the prosecution of the war. The Central War Industry Committee was headed by A. I. Guchkov, a big industrialist and leader of the Octobrists. In an attempt to spread the idea of support for the imperialist war among the working class, the bourgeoisie organised in these committees "workers' groups" in which Mensheviks participated. The Bolsheviks declared a boycott of the war industry committees and were supported by the workers. p. 24

- <sup>13</sup> This article was published in Pravda No 26, April 7, 1917, over the signature *N. Lenin*. It contains the famous "April Theses", apparently written in the train, before Lenin's arrival in Petrograd.

Lenin read the theses at two meetings held at the Taurida Palace on April 4 (17), 1917: at a meeting of Bolsheviks and at a joint meeting of the Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates to the All-Russia Conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. p. 29

- <sup>14</sup> The *Popular Socialists*—members of the petty-bourgeois Labour Popular Socialist Party, which separated from the Right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party in 1906. The Popular Socialists favoured forming a bloc with the Cadets.

After the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917, the Popular Socialist Party merged with the Trudoviks and actively supported the bourgeois Provisional Government, in which it was represented. After the October Socialist Revolution the Popular Socialists participated in counter-revolutionary plots and armed actions against Soviet power. p. 30

- <sup>15</sup> The *Socialist-Revolutionaries (S.R.s)*—a petty-bourgeois party formed in Russia in late 1901 and early 1902. The S.R.s demanded the abolition of private property in land and its transfer to the village communes on an equalitarian land tenure basis. They did not see the class differences between the proletariat and the peasantry, glossed over the class differentiation and the contradictions within the peasantry between the working peasants and the kulaks, and denied the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution. Their policy was characterised by adventurism, individual terror being their chief method of struggle against tsarism.

When the 1905-07 Revolution was defeated, many of the Socialist-Revolutionaries adopted the position of bourgeois liberalism. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution, the S.R.s, with the Mensheviks, were the mainstay of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government and the party's leaders were members of that government. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party refused to support the peasants' demand for the abolition of the landed estates and the S.R. Ministers in the Provisional Government sent punitive expeditions against the peasants who had seized landed estates. After the October Socialist Revolution the S.R.s actively supported the bourgeoisie, landowners and foreign interventionists in their struggle against Soviet power. p. 30



- <sup>16</sup> *Yedinstvo* (Unity)—a daily, organ of the extreme Right-wing Menshevik defencists headed by G. V. Plekhanov; it was published in Petrograd from May 1914 to January 1918.

The newspaper gave support to the Provisional Government, advocated a coalition with the bourgeoisie, and opposed the Bolsheviks, frequently resorting to gutter press methods. p. 32

- <sup>17</sup> *Russkaya Volya* (Russian Freedom)—a bourgeois daily founded by the Minister for the Interior A. D. Protopopov and financed by the big banks. It appeared in Petrograd from December 1916 to October 1917. p. 32

- <sup>18</sup> See Marx and Engels, "Preface to German Edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*" written in 1872; Marx, *The Civil War in France*, "Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association" and "Critique of the Gotha Programme"; Marx's letters to Ludwig Kugelmann of April 12 and 17, 1871, and Engels's letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, pp. 98-99; Vol. 2, Moscow, 1973, pp. 190-94, 420-22; Vol. 3, Moscow, 1973, pp. 13-37; Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 290-96). p. 33

- <sup>19</sup> *Blanquism*—a trend in the French socialist movement headed by Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881), a prominent revolutionary and representative of French utopian communism.

The Blanquists denied the class struggle and expected that "mankind will be emancipated from wage slavery, not by the proletarian class struggle, but through a conspiracy hatched by a small minority of intellectuals" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 392). In substituting the actions of a group of conspirators for the activities of a revolutionary party, the Blanquists did not take into account the concrete situation essential for a victorious uprising and disregarded contacts with the masses. p. 36

- <sup>20</sup> The *All-Russia Conference of Railwaymen* was held in Petrograd from April 6 to 20 (April 19 to May 3), 1917. Led by the conciliator parties, it adopted a defencist attitude and declared its full support for the Provisional Government. I. A. Teodorovich, who spoke at the Conference, "introduced some discord into the general mood", as the Menshevik *Yedinstvo* wrote. The Conference elected an Executive Committee and adopted instructions on political questions and the practical issues of rehabilitating railway transport. p. 42

- <sup>21</sup> A quotation from Krylov's fable "The Cat and the Cook". p. 43

- <sup>22</sup> See Engels's letter to August Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 290-96). p. 46

- <sup>23</sup> Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France*: "Address of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association" (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 190-94). p. 47

- <sup>24</sup> *Narodism*—a petty-bourgeois trend in the Russian revolutionary movement which arose in the 1860s-1870s. The Narodniks advocated the abolition of the autocracy and the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants. They considered themselves as socialists, but theirs was a utopian socialism.

The Narodniks denied that the development of capitalist relations in Russia was a law-governed process and therefore regarded the peasants, and not the proletariat, as the main revolutionary force. They saw the

village commune as the embryo of socialism. They denied the role of the popular masses in historical development, maintaining that history was made by outstanding personalities, "heroes", whom they counterposed to the "passive" crowd. With the object of rousing the peasants to struggle against the autocracy, the Narodniks went to the country, "among the people" ("Narod" in Russian), but found no support there.

Narodism passed through several stages, developing from revolutionary democracy to liberalism.

In the 1880s and 1890s the Narodniks adopted a policy of conciliation with tsarism, expressed the interests of the kulaks and fought against Marxism. p. 49

- <sup>25</sup> *Manilovism*—from the name Manilov, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, an easy-going sentimental landowner, whose name has become a synonym for an idle weak-willed dreamer. p. 52

- <sup>26</sup> The *Fabians*—members of the Fabian Society, an English reformist organisation founded in 1884. The membership of the Fabian Society consisted chiefly of bourgeois intellectuals—scholars, writers and politicians. They denied the need for the proletarian class struggle and a socialist revolution, and maintained that the transition from capitalism to socialism could be brought about only by means of minor reforms, gradual transformation of society. Lenin described Fabianism as "an extremely opportunist trend". In 1900 the Fabian Society joined the Labour Party. p. 52

- <sup>27</sup> The *British Labour Party* was founded in 1900 as an association of trade unions, socialist organisations and groups for the purpose of sending workers' deputies to Parliament. It was first known as the Labour Representation Committee but in 1906 assumed the name of Labour Party. The members of trade unions are considered to belong to the party if they pay the party dues.

The Labour Party was originally a party of workers but was later joined by a considerable number of petty bourgeois. It is opportunist in its ideology and tactics. Its leaders have always pursued a policy of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie. During the First World War they adopted a social-chauvinist position. The Labour Party has repeatedly formed governments which invariably pursued the policy of British imperialism. p. 52

- <sup>28</sup> The *Workers' or Labour group (Arbeitsgemeinschaft)*—an organisation of the German Centrists (Kautskyites) formed in the spring of 1916. They put forward pacifist slogans but actually supported the social-chauvinists and aimed their main blows against the *Internationale* group which fought against the German imperialist government and the imperialist war. In April 1917 the labour group and other Centrist groups formed the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany. p. 53

- <sup>29</sup> *Minoritaires or Longuetists*—a Centrist minority of the French Socialist Party which took shape in 1915 and was headed by Jean Longuet. During the First World War they adopted a social-pacifist stand. At the Tours Congress of the French Socialist Party in December 1920, when the Left wing was victorious, the Longuetists, together with the avowed reformists, broke away from the party and joined the so-called Two-and-a-Half International; after its collapse they returned to the Second International. p. 53

- <sup>30</sup> The *Independent Labour Party of Britain*—a reformist organisation founded in 1893 during the active strike movement and the mounting drive for independence of the British working class from the bourgeois parties. The

Party was headed by James Keir-Hardie. From the very beginning it took a bourgeois-reformist stand, devoting its chief attention to parliamentary forms of struggle and parliamentary deals with the Liberal Party. Lenin wrote of the Independent Labour Party that it was "actually an opportunist party that has always been dependent on the bourgeoisie" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 494).

On the outbreak of the First World War the I.L.P. issued a manifesto against the war, but soon adopted a social-chauvinist stand. p. 53

- <sup>31</sup> The *British Socialist Party* was founded in 1911 in Manchester, as a result of the amalgamation of the Social-Democratic Party with other socialist groups. The B.S.P. carried on propaganda in the spirit of Marxist ideas, it was "not opportunist and was *really* independent of the Liberals" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 273).

Owing to its small membership and poor contact with the masses, however, it was somewhat sectarian in character. During the First World War a sharp struggle developed between its internationalist trend (William Gallacher, Albert Inkpin, John Maclean, Theodore Rothstein and others) and the social-chauvinist trend headed by Hyndman. There were inconsistent elements within the internationalist trend who took a Centrist stand on a number of issues. In February 1916 a group of the Party's active members founded the newspaper *The Call*, which played an important part in uniting the internationalists. The annual conference of the B.S.P. held at Salford in April 1916 condemned the social-chauvinist stand adopted by Hyndman and his supporters, and they left the Party.

The British Socialist Party, together with the Communist Unity Group, played a leading role in the formation of the Communist Party of Great Britain. At the First (Unity) Congress held in 1920 the overwhelming majority of the B.S.P. local organisations joined the Communist Party. p. 53

- <sup>32</sup> The *Zimmerwald Left group* was founded on Lenin's initiative at the International Socialist Conference held in Zimmerwald in September 1915. It consisted of eight delegates from the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P., the Left Social-Democrats of Sweden, Norway, Switzerland and Germany, the Polish Social-Democratic opposition and the Social-Democrats of the Latvian area. The Zimmerwald Left group, headed by Lenin, waged a struggle against the Centrist majority of the Conference. They declared that while remaining in the Zimmerwald organisation they would disseminate their views and work independently on an international scale.

The Bolsheviks, the only group to take a consistent internationalist stand, were the guiding force in the Zimmerwald Left. p. 54

- <sup>33</sup> The *Internationale* group, later called the *Spartacus League* was a revolutionary organisation of the German Left Social-Democrats. It was formed by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin and others at the beginning of the First World War around the journal *Die Internationale* founded by Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring in April 1915. It was formally organised as a group under the name of the *Internationale* in January 1916. From 1916 it illegally published and circulated "Political Letters" signed "Spartacus", and therefore was also called the Spartacus group.

The Spartacus group conducted revolutionary propaganda among the masses, organised mass anti-war demonstrations, led strikes and exposed the imperialist character of the First World War and the treachery of the opportunist Social-Democratic leaders. During the November 1918 revolution in Germany the Spartacus group assumed the name of Spartacus League and

at the Inaugural Congress held on December 30, 1918-January 1, 1919, founded the Communist Party of Germany. p. 54

- <sup>34</sup> *Arbeiterpolitik*—a weekly journal on questions of scientific socialism, organ of the Bremen group of Left Radicals who joined the Communist Party of Germany in 1919; it was published in Bremen from 1916 to 1919. p. 55

- <sup>35</sup> *Demain*—a literary and political monthly founded by the French internationalist writer and journalist Henri Guilbeaux and published from January 1916 to 1919. p. 55

- <sup>36</sup> *The Trade Unionist*—a British trade union newspaper published in London from November 1915 to November 1916. p. 55

- <sup>37</sup> The *Socialist Labour Party of America* was founded at the Congress in Philadelphia in 1876 as a result of the amalgamation of the American sections of the First International and other socialist organisations. In the 1890s the leadership of the Party was assumed by the Left wing headed by D. DeLeon. During the First World War the Socialist Labour Party leaned towards internationalism. In 1919 its revolutionary wing took part in organising the Communist Party of America. p. 55

- <sup>38</sup> The *Socialist Party of America* was formed at the Congress in Indianapolis in 1901 as a result of the amalgamation of a number of socialist groups. During the First World War three trends appeared in the Party—the social-chauvinists, who supported the imperialist policy of the government, the Centrists, who paid lip-service to the struggle against the imperialist war, and the revolutionary minority (Charles Ruthenberg, William Foster, William Haywood and others), who took an internationalist position and actively opposed the war.

In 1919 a split occurred in the Socialist Party. The breakaway Left wing took the lead in forming the Communist Party of America, of which it became the core. p. 55

- <sup>39</sup> *The Internationalist*—a weekly newspaper, organ of the Left wing of the American Socialists; it was published by the American League of Socialist Propaganda in Boston at the beginning of 1917. p. 55

- <sup>40</sup> The *Tribunists*—members of the Social-Democratic Party of Holland, whose mouthpiece was the newspaper *De Tribune*. The Tribunists were not a consistently revolutionary party, but they represented the Left wing of the Dutch labour movement, and during the First World War they adopted, in the main, an internationalist stand.

In 1918 the Tribunists formed the Communist Party of Holland.

*De Tribune*—a newspaper founded in 1907 by the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Labour Party of Holland. In 1909, after the expulsion of the Left members, who formed the Social-Democratic Party of Holland, the paper became the organ of that party; in 1918 it became the organ of the Dutch Communist Party, and appeared under the name *De Tribune* until 1940. p. 55

- <sup>41</sup> The *Party of the Young*, or the *Left*—the name given by Lenin to the Left wing of the Swedish Social-Democrats. During the First World War they took an internationalist stand and aligned themselves with the Zimmerwald Left. In May 1917 they formed the Left Social-Democratic Party of Sweden. At its Congress in 1919 the Party decided to join the Communist International. The revolutionary wing of the Party formed the Communist Party of Sweden in 1921. p. 55

- <sup>42</sup> *Tesnyaki*—a revolutionary trend in the Social-Democratic Party of Bulgaria which in 1903 formed its own Bulgarian Social-Democratic Labour Party. The Tesnyaki opposed the imperialist war. In 1919 they joined the Communist International and founded the Communist Party of Bulgaria. p. 55
- <sup>43</sup> *Avanti!*—a daily, central organ of the Italian Socialist Party, founded in Rome in December 1896. 55
- <sup>44</sup> At the beginning of 1912 a split took place in the Polish Social-Democratic Party between the supporters of the Chief Executive (Zarzadowcy), who adopted a position of compromise with regard to the liquidators, and the adherents of the Regional Executive (Rozlamowcy), who opposed the liquidators and co-operated with the Bolsheviks.  
During the First World War the two groups united into one party which adopted an internationalist stand. p. 55
- <sup>45</sup> The resolution was written by Lenin and tabled by the Swiss Left Social-Democrats, in their name, at the Cantonal Congress of the Zurich Social-Democratic organisation held at Töss on February 11 and 12, 1917. p. 55
- <sup>46</sup> Lenin refers to the newspaper *Volksstimme*, organ of the German Social-Democratic Party, published in Chemnitz from 1891 to 1933.  
*Die Glocke*—a fortnightly journal published in Munich and subsequently in Berlin from 1915 to 1925 by the social-chauvinist Parvus (A. L. Gelfand), a member of the German Social-Democratic Party. p. 57
- <sup>47</sup> The reference is to the appeal "To the Peoples Suffering Ruination and Death" adopted at the Second International Socialist Conference in Kienthal in 1916. p. 57
- <sup>48</sup> Lenin criticised the resolutions of the French Socialist Party in his work "Bourgeois Pacifism and Socialist Pacifism", devoting to it a special chapter, "The Pacifism of the French Socialists and Syndicalists" (see *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 186-91). Both resolutions greeted U.S. President Wilson who came out with a peace-making proposal to all nations to make public their views of the conditions on which the war could be finished, that is, a proposal to end the imperialist war with an imperialist peace. p. 57
- <sup>49</sup> *Die Jugendinternationale*—organ of the International Union of Socialist Youth Organisations associated with the Zimmerwald Left; it was published in Zurich from September 1915 to May 1918. p. 57
- <sup>50</sup> *Rabochaya Gazeta* (Workers' Newspaper)—a Menshevik daily published in Petrograd from March to November 1917. The newspaper supported the bourgeois Provisional Government and opposed the Bolshevik Party and its leader V. I. Lenin. It displayed a hostile attitude towards the October Socialist Revolution. p. 59
- <sup>51</sup> On April 7 (20), 1917, the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, by a majority of 21 votes to 14, adopted a resolution in favour of supporting the so-called "Liberty loan" issued by the Provisional Government to finance the continuing imperialist war. The Bolshevik members of the Executive Committee opposed this loan, declaring that support of it was tantamount to voting for war credits, and moved a resolution containing a detailed statement of their position. p. 59

- <sup>52</sup> Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme"; Frederick Engels, Preface to *Internationales aus dem Volksstaat (1871-75)* (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 13-30). p. 60
- <sup>53</sup> This expression from Heine was first quoted by Marx and Engels in their *German Ideology* (Part IV, "*Karl Grün*", Section 4, "The School of Saint-Simon"). (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, p. 574). p. 61
- <sup>54</sup> This refers to the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P. (B.) held in Petrograd from April 24 to 29 (May 7 to 12), 1917. p. 63
- <sup>55</sup> *Soldatskaya Pravda* (Soldiers' Truth)—a Bolshevik daily published from April 1917 to March 1918, first as the organ of the Military Organisation of the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), and then as the organ of the Military Organisation of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Central Committee. p. 63
- <sup>56</sup> The International Socialist Commission proposed to convene the third conference of Zimmerwald socialists in Stockholm on May 31, 1917, but the conference was postponed several times. V. I. Lenin was of the opinion that the Bolsheviks should immediately dissociate themselves from the Zimmerwald association, in which the Centrists had turned to social-chauvinism, and set about organising a Third International. He considered the participation of the Bolsheviks in this conference possible only for purposes of information. By a majority vote the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference decided to send Bolshevik delegates to the conference.  
The conference was held from September 5 to 12, 1917 p. 64
- <sup>57</sup> *Pravda* (Truth)—a legal Bolshevik daily published in St. Petersburg from April 22 (May 5), 1912.  
The newspaper was published with money collected by the workers, it had an average daily circulation of 40,000, rising in some cases to 60,000.  
*Pravda* was subjected to constant police persecutions and was closed down on July 8 (21), 1914.  
It resumed publication only after the bourgeois-democratic revolution in February 1917. Beginning with March 5 (18), 1917, it came out as the organ of the R.S.D.L.P. Central Committee and the Petrograd Committee of the Party. On April 5 (18), on his return from abroad, Lenin joined the editorial board of *Pravda* and became its editor-in-chief. From July to October 1917 the newspaper was persecuted by the counter-revolutionary bourgeois Provisional Government and often changed its name, appearing as *Listok Pravdy* (*Pravda's News-sheet*), *Proletary* (*The Proletarian*), *Rabochy* (*The Worker*), *Rabochy Put* (*The Workers' Path*). After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution, from October 27 (November 9), 1917, the Central Organ of the Party came out under its old name of *Pravda*. p. 64
- <sup>58</sup> The coalition Provisional Government was formed as a result of the crisis caused by a Note which Milyukov, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, sent to the Allied governments on April 18 (May 1), 1917, confirming the Provisional Government's readiness to honour all the treaties which the tsarist government had concluded with the allied imperialist powers—Britain and France. Owing to spontaneous demonstrations of protest, which on April 20 and 21 (May 3 and 4) developed into a powerful movement of the workers and soldiers, the Provisional Government, to create the impression of a change in policy, accepted the resignation of Foreign Minister Milyukov and War Minister Guchkov and proposed to the Petrograd Soviet to form a coalition government.  
Despite its decision of March 1 (14) forbidding members of the Soviet to join the Provisional Government, the Executive Committee, at a special

meeting held on the night of May 1 (14), accepted the proposal of the Provisional Government.

After the negotiations an agreement was reached on May 5 (18) for the distribution of posts in the new government, as a result of which, in addition to the 10 capitalist ministers, five socialist ministers were to join the cabinet, namely: Kerensky—Minister of the Army and Navy, Skobelev—Minister of Labour, Chernov—Minister of Agriculture, Peshekhonov—Minister of Food Supply, and Tsereteli—Minister of Posts and Telegraphs. The bourgeois Provisional Government was saved by the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks, who openly sided with the bourgeoisie. p. 64

<sup>59</sup> The reference is to the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

64

<sup>60</sup> Lenin is referring to an order by War Minister Kerensky published on May 11 (24), 1917, containing a "Declaration of the Rights of the Soldier" in which there was a clause allowing a superior officer to use force in cases of insubordination in the field. This clause was aimed against soldiers and officers who refused to go into the attack. Simultaneously with the publication of this order Kerensky started to disband regiments and prosecute officers and soldiers guilty of "inciting to insubordination". p. 65

<sup>61</sup> *Rech* (Speech)—a daily, central organ of the Cadet Party, published in St. Petersburg from 1906 to October 1917. p. 70

<sup>62</sup> *Dyelo Naroda* (People's Cause)—a daily, organ of the Centrist group of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, published in Petrograd from March 1917 to July 1918. p. 71

<sup>63</sup> See Marx's letter to Ludwig Kugelmann dated April 17, 1871 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 421-22). p. 76

<sup>64</sup> The *Erfurt Programme*—the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted at the Congress in Erfurt in October 1891. It was based on the Marxist doctrine of the inevitable doom of the capitalist mode of production and its replacement by the socialist mode; it stressed the need for the working class to wage a political struggle, pointed to the party's leading role in that struggle, and so on. The Erfurt Programme, however, contained serious concessions to opportunism; it did not say anything about the dictatorship of the proletariat. A comprehensive criticism of the original draft of the Erfurt Programme was given by Engels in his "Criticism of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891". The leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party concealed Engels's criticism from the Party rank and file, and his most important comments were disregarded when the final text of the programme was drawn up. p. 77

<sup>65</sup> The reference is to the adventurist tactics of a small group of members of the Petrograd Party Committee, who, during the April 1917 demonstration, put forward the slogan of the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government, which at that time was an adventurist and incorrect slogan because it contradicted the Party line on the peaceful development of the revolution. p. 80

<sup>66</sup> The reference is to the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. p. 86

<sup>67</sup> *Birzheviye Uedomosti* (Stock-Exchange Recorder)—a bourgeois newspaper published in St. Petersburg from 1880 to 1917. Its abbreviated name

*Birzhevka* became synonymous of unscrupulousness, venality and lack of principle p. 88

- <sup>68</sup> This resolution was adopted by a majority vote with three abstentions. The work of drawing up a new Party programme was completed after the October Socialist Revolution. The new programme was adopted at the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.) in March 1919. p. 96

- <sup>69</sup> Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 124). p. 96

- <sup>70</sup> The reference is to the Fourth (Unity) Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. held in Stockholm from April 10 to 25 (April 23 to May 8), 1906.

The Mensheviks were in the majority at the Congress because many of the Bolshevik organisations, which had led the armed actions of the masses, were suppressed and could not send their delegates, while the Menshevik organisations, which were mostly in the non-industrial regions where there had been no mass revolutionary actions, were able to send more delegates.

The Congress discussed the following issues: 1) revision of the agrarian programme; 2) the current situation and the class tasks of the proletariat; 3) attitude to the Duma; 4) armed uprising; 5) guerrilla actions; 6) unification with non-Russian Social-Democratic parties, and 7) Party Rules.

A sharp struggle developed between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks on all the issues. The Congress approved the Menshevik resolutions on the Duma and on the armed uprising, and adopted their agrarian programme. On the question of the attitude to the bourgeois parties the Congress supported the resolution of the Amsterdam International Congress. The compromise resolution on the trade unions and the resolution on the attitude to the peasant movement were adopted by the Congress without discussion.

At the same time, on the demand of the Party rank and file the Congress adopted Lenin's formulation of Clause 1 of the Party Rules and rejected Martov's opportunist formulation. The Bolshevik formulation on democratic centralism was included in the Rules for the first time. p. 97

- <sup>71</sup> "*Bill of the 104*"—an agrarian bill introduced by the Trudoviks in the First Duma on May 23 (June 5), 1906 and signed by 104 peasant deputies. p. 98

- <sup>72</sup> The reference is to *The Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy in the First Russian Revolution, 1905-1907*, written by Lenin in 1907. The book was printed in St. Petersburg in 1908, but the police seized it while still at the printers and destroyed it. Only one copy was saved. The book was first published in 1917. p. 98

- <sup>73</sup> This refers to the agrarian reform carried out by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers P. A. Stolypin. The decree of November 9 (22), 1906 established the peasants' proprietary rights on the allotment lands and entitled them to withdraw from the village commune to an *otrub* (homestead). The peasants who withdrew from the village commune could get subsidies through the Peasant Bank to buy the land. The Stolypin agrarian reform aimed at establishing a class of kulaks as a bulwark of tsarist autocracy in the countryside while retaining big landed proprietorship and forcibly destroying the commune.

The reform accelerated the development of capitalism in agriculture and the differentiation of the peasantry, and sharpened the class struggle in the countryside. p. 99



<sup>74</sup> *Royal demesnes*—lands belonging to members of the tsar's family.  
*Cabinet lands*—lands belonging to the tsar in person. p. 103

<sup>75</sup> See Engels, "Flüchtlings-Literatur. 1. Eine polnische Proklamation". p. 108

<sup>76</sup> The reference is to the resolution "On Borgbjerg's Proposal" adopted at the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.). In April 1917 the Danish Social-Democrat Borgbjerg, who was associated with the German social-chauvinists, arrived to Petrograd and, on behalf of the Joint Committee of the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish Labour parties, invited the socialist parties of Russia to attend a "peace conference of socialists" to be held in Stockholm in May 1917. On Lenin's proposal, the April Conference declared against participation in this conference as it was convened by the social-chauvinists, and exposed its imperialist character.

When this question was discussed at the meeting of the Petrograd Soviet Executive Committee, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries accepted Borgbjerg's proposal and decided to take the initiative in calling the conference and to set up a special committee for that purpose. The conference, however, was not convened. p. 108

<sup>77</sup> The *First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* was held in Petrograd from June 3 to 24 (June 16-July 7), 1917. The overwhelming majority of delegates were Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. In their speeches and resolutions they called on the workers and soldiers to strengthen army discipline, launch an offensive at the front and support the Provisional Government, and resolutely opposed the transfer of power to the Soviets, since, as the Minister Tsereteli said, there was no political party in Russia that would assume full power alone. In reply to this Lenin declared on behalf of the Bolsheviks that there was such a party, and in his speech from the rostrum he said that the Bolshevik Party was prepared at any minute to take over full power.

The Bolsheviks made use of the Congress to expose the imperialist policy of the Provisional Government and the compromising tactics of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and demanded the transfer of all power to the Soviets.

The Congress elected the Central Executive Committee which existed until the Second Congress of Soviets and in which the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks had an overwhelming majority. p. 117

<sup>78</sup> See Engels's letter to F. A. Sorge dated November 29, 1886 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 395-98). p. 119

<sup>79</sup> The reference is to the decisions of the Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) p. 120

<sup>80</sup> Lenin refers to the tsarist government's suppression of the national liberation and revolutionary movement. V. P. Iyakhov, a colonel of the tsarist army, commanded the Russian troops which put down the bourgeois revolution in Persia in 1908. p. 121

<sup>81</sup> *Izvestia of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*—a daily, began to appear in February 1917.

Beginning with September 1917 the newspaper appeared under the title of *Izvestia of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*. It was controlled by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries and waged a fierce struggle against the Bolshevik Party.

After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution *Izvestia* became the official organ of the Soviet government. p. 121

- <sup>82</sup> The *First All-Russia Congress of Peasant Deputies* was held in Petrograd from May 4 to 28 (May 17 to June 10), 1917. The Socialist-Revolutionaries, who took the initiative in organising the Congress, greatly influenced the election of delegates in the gubernias. The Congress, at which the Socialist-Revolutionaries had a considerable majority, became the scene of a struggle between them and the Bolsheviks to win over the peasant masses. A particularly sharp struggle developed on the main item on the agenda of the Congress, the agrarian question. In his speech and the resolution submitted in the name of the Bolshevik group, V. I. Lenin proposed that the land should be proclaimed the property of the whole people and that the landed estates should be immediately handed over free of charge to the peasants without waiting for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

The Socialist-Revolutionary leaders, however, succeeded in having their resolutions adopted by the Congress. The decisions adopted by the Congress expressed the interests of the village bourgeoisie, the kulaks. p. 121

- <sup>83</sup> *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life)—a daily newspaper published in Petrograd from April 1917 to July 1918. It was founded by a group of Menshevik internationalists and writers united around the journal *Letopis*.

Lenin refers to V. Bazarov's article "What Next?" dealing with the question of how to end the war and printed in issue No. 40 of *Novaya Zhizn*, June 4 (17), 1917. Bazarov was in favour of continuing a separate war allegedly to save the revolution. p. 122

- <sup>84</sup> Lenin has in mind the British Government's issue of a passport to Ramsay MacDonald, the British Independent Labour Party leader who was invited to Russia by the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The trip was prevented by the British Seamen's Union, which refused to man the ship in which MacDonald was to sail to Russia. p. 123

- <sup>85</sup> The *Manifesto of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies "To the Peoples of the World"* was adopted at the sitting of the Soviet on March 14 (27), 1917, and published the next day in the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*. The Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik majority of the Soviet were compelled to issue this Manifesto by pressure from a broad movement of the working masses demanding an end to the war.

The Manifesto called on the peoples of the belligerent countries to take resolute joint action for peace, but it did not expose the predatory nature of the war, did not propose any practical steps in the struggle for peace, and in effect justified the continuation of the imperialist war by the bourgeois Provisional Government. p. 123

- <sup>86</sup> In June 1917 Italy occupied Albania and proclaimed it independent under Italy's virtual protectorate.

In Greece, a coup d'état was carried out under pressure from Britain and France. By launching an economic blockade which caused a terrible famine, and by occupying a number of Greek provinces, the Allies forced King Constantine to abdicate, and put Venizelos, their supporter, in power. Greece was dragged into the war on the side of the Entente, against the will of the vast majority of her people.

During the First World War Persia (Iran) was occupied by British and

Russian troops. Early in 1917 Persia, having lost all independence, was occupied by Russian troops in the north and British in the south.

Provisional Government diplomats backed all these acts of brute imperialist force. p. 124

- <sup>87</sup> The reference is to the declaration which the bureau of the Bolshevik group and the bureau of the united internationalist Social-Democrats made at the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets. They demanded that the Congress should first of all discuss the offensive at the front for which the Provisional Government was preparing. The declaration pointed out that this offensive was dictated by the inagates of the imperialist Allies and that the Russian counter-revolutionaries expected thereby to concentrate power in the hands of the military-diplomatic and capitalist groups, and to strike a blow at the revolutionary struggle for peace and at the positions gained by the Russian democrats. The declaration warned the working class, the army and the peasants against the danger threatening the country, and called on the Congress to give an immediate rebuff to the counter-revolutionary onslaught.

This proposal of the bureau of the R S D. I. P (B.) group was turned down by the Congress.

The order to begin the offensive was given by the War Minister Kerensky on June 16 (29), 1917. On June 18 (July 1) the Russian forces assumed the offensive on the South-Western Front. For the first days the offensive was successful and the Russians made headway, taking several thousand prisoners. Later, however, the fact that the troops were tired, did not understand the purpose of the offensive, and were insufficiently trained to use their equipment led to a German break-through which forced the Russian troops to a retreat in disorder. The Russian Army suffered a crushing defeat, losing about 60,000 men and officers in ten days.

The failure of the offensive meant at the same time the failure of the entire policy of the Provisional Government and the S.R. and Menshevik defencist bloc supporting it. The defeat at the front increased the influence of the Bolsheviks among the workers and soldiers, who could see more and more clearly that the Bolsheviks were right. The news of the enormous casualties which the offensive had involved aroused a mighty wave of indignation among the working people and hastened a new political crisis in the country. p. 124

- <sup>88</sup> The reference is to the demonstration organised by the Bolshevik Party and held on June 18 (July 1), 1917.

Early in June, tension in Petrograd grew. The prolongation of the war by the Provisional Government, preparations for an offensive at the front and food shortages, all provoked resentment and indignation among the workers and soldiers. To prevent provocations and unnecessary loss of life, a joint meeting of members of the Central and Petrograd Party Committees, the Military Organisation with representatives of the district workers and army units, held on June 8 (21), decided on Lenin's proposal to hold a peaceful and orderly demonstration on June 10 (23).

This decision of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party was welcomed by the masses and alarmed both the government and the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, who resolved to foil the demonstration. On the evening of June 9 (22) the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, led by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries took a decision banning all street demonstrations for three days.

On Lenin's proposal, the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, not wishing to go against the decision of the Congress, resolved on the night of June 10 (23) to call off the demonstration. Two days later the S R and Menshevik leadership of the Congress of Soviets carried a decision

to hold a demonstration on June 18 (July 1), the day when the Russian troops were to begin the offensive. The leaders of the conciliating parties wanted to demonstrate the people's confidence in the Provisional Government

On June 18 (July 1) nearly 500,000 Petrograd workers and soldiers turned out for the demonstration. Most of them carried revolutionary slogans of the Bolshevik Party. Only small groups carried the conciliating parties' slogans expressing confidence in the Provisional Government. The demonstration showed the enhanced revolutionary spirit of the masses and the vastly increased influence and prestige of the Bolshevik Party. It also revealed the complete failure of the petty-bourgeois conciliating parties supporting the Provisional Government. p. 127

- <sup>89</sup> On July 2 (15), 1917, the Cadet Ministers Shingaryov, Manuilov and Shakhovskoi resigned from the Provisional Government on the pretext that they disagreed with the Government's stand on the Ukrainian question.

The true reason for the Cadets' resignation was their intention to provoke a government crisis so as to bring pressure to bear on the "socialist" Ministers and make them consent to a Cadet counter-revolutionary programme disarming of the Red Guards, withdrawal of the revolutionary troops from Petrograd and banning of the Bolshevik Party. p. 130

- <sup>90</sup> The reference is to the mass demonstrations held in Petrograd on July 3 and 4 (16 and 17), 1917, which reflected the profound political crisis in the country

On July 3 (16), a demonstration began which threatened to develop into an armed insurrection against the Provisional Government for having sent the troops into an offensive which it knew was doomed to failure (see Note 88).

The Bolshevik Party was against all armed action at the time, for it considered that there was as yet no revolutionary crisis in the country. The Central Committee meeting held on July 3 (16) decided to refrain from action. A similar resolution was adopted by the Bolsheviks' Second Petrograd City Conference, which took place at the same time. Conference delegates went to the factories and districts to restrain the masses. But action had already begun and there was no stopping it.

In view of the mood of the masses, the Central Committee, meeting in a joint session with the Petrograd Committee and the Military Organisation, resolved late in the evening of July 3 (16) to join in the demonstration in order to give it a peaceful and orderly character.

Over 500,000 people took part in the July 4 (17) demonstration. They carried Bolshevik slogans—"All Power to the Soviets", etc. They insisted that the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets take power into its hands, but the S.R. and Menshevik leaders refused to take power.

With the knowledge and consent of the Menshevik and S.R. Central Executive Committee, the Provisional Government sent military cadets and Cossacks against the peaceful demonstration. The troops opened fire.

At a meeting of the Central and Petrograd Committees held on the night of July 5 under Lenin's leadership it was decided to end the demonstration in an orderly fashion. The Mensheviks and S.R.s joined the bourgeoisie in an attack on the Bolshevik Party. Workers were disarmed, and arrests, house searches and riots took place.

After the July events full power in the country was taken over by the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government. The Soviets became a mere appendage to it. The dual power ended and so did the peaceful period of the revolution. p. 132

- <sup>91</sup> *Zhivoye Slovo* (The Living Word)—a yellow daily newspaper with Black-Hundred leanings published in Petrograd from 1916 to October 1917.  
p. 133
- <sup>92</sup> The *Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine*—a bourgeois nationalist organisation founded by a group of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists in 1914, at the beginning of the First World War. Anticipating tsarist Russia's defeat in the war, the Union sought the Ukraine's secession from Russia and the establishment of a bourgeois and landowner Ukrainian monarchy under a German protectorate.  
p. 133
- <sup>93</sup> The reference is to the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. held from July 17 (30) to August 10 (23), 1903. The first 13 sittings took place in Brussels, but then, owing to police persecution, the Congress moved to London.  
The Polish Social-Democrats, who took part in the Congress with voice but without vote, disagreed with the Party programme clause on the right of nations to self-determination, erroneously believing that it would play into the hand of the Polish nationalists. At the sitting of the Programme Committee they suggested that the clause should be deleted. However they did not defend their proposal at the Congress sitting and left the Congress disagreeing with the decision adopted.  
p. 134
- <sup>94</sup> *Black Hundreds*—monarchist bands formed by the tsarist police to fight the revolutionary movement.  
p. 136
- Listok Pravdy* (*Pravda's* News-sheet)—one of the names of the legal Bolshevik daily newspaper *Pravda*.  
p. 137
- <sup>95</sup> The reference is to the following facts. On April 20 (May 3) the newspapers published a Note which the Foreign Minister Milyukov had sent to the Allied governments, confirming the Provisional Government's readiness to honour all the treaties of the tsarist government and pursue the war to a victorious end. The imperialist policy of the Provisional Government roused the indignation of the working masses. On the call of the Bolshevik Party the Petrograd workers stopped work on April 21 (May 4) and took to the streets demanding peace. Over 100,000 workers and soldiers took part in the demonstration. Protest meetings and demonstrations were also held in Moscow, the Urals, the Ukraine, Kronstadt and other cities and regions of the country. Resolutions of the Soviets dispatched to the Petrograd Soviet from many cities protested against Milyukov's Note.  
The April demonstration marked the beginning of a government crisis. See Note 58.  
p. 137
- <sup>97</sup> The article was written in connection with the fact that after the suppression of the July demonstration the Provisional Government ordered the arrest of Lenin and other Bolshevik Party leaders. However, the Provisional Government did not intend to put them on trial, it was later revealed that the military cadets who were to arrest Lenin, had been ordered by the government to kill him on the way to prison.  
Lenin, indignant at the slanderous accusations levelled against him (see pp. 132-36 of the present volume), first intended to appear before the court of the Provisional Government. In his letter to the Bureau of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets Lenin protested against his flat being searched on the night of July 7 (20) and wrote that if the Central Executive Committee endorsed the Provisional Government's order

for his arrest, he would submit to it. The Menshevik and S.R. Leaders of the Executive Committee endorsed the order.

The question of Lenin's appearance before the court was of general Party significance. It was discussed at a meeting of CC members and Party functionaries on July 7 (20) at the flat of the worker S. Y. Alliluyev, a veteran Bolshevik, where Lenin was in hiding at the time. The meeting decided that Lenin should not appear before a court of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government. The same decision was taken by the extended meeting of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) Central Committee held jointly with representatives from the Petrograd and Moscow Bolshevik organisations on July 13 and 14 (26 and 27), 1917

This question was one of the first items discussed by the Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.), which unanimously passed a resolution against Lenin's appearance in court. p. 141

- <sup>98</sup> The letter to the editors of *Proletarskoye Dyelo*, published in the newspaper, was also signed by G. Zinoviev.

*Proletarskoye Dyelo* (Proletarian Cause)—organ of the Bolshevik group of the Kronstadt Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies published in Kronstadt in 1917. p. 146

- <sup>99</sup> *Novoye Vremya* (New Times)—a daily published in St Petersburg from 1868 to 1917. It was owned by different publishers at different times and repeatedly changed its political trend. In 1905 it became a Black-Hundred paper and conducted a fierce anti-Bolshevik campaign. p. 146

- <sup>100</sup> The *Dreyfus case*—a provocative trial engineered in 1894 by the reactionary monarchists among the French military. Dreyfus, a Jewish officer of the French General Staff, was sentenced to life imprisonment on a fictitious charge of espionage and high treason. The trial was used by the reactionary circles in France to incite anti-Semitism and to attack the republican regime and democratic liberties. When the socialists and progressive bourgeois democrats, including Emile Zola, Jean Jaurès, and Anatole France, launched a campaign for a re-examination of the Dreyfus case, it immediately became a political issue and split the country into two camps—the republicans and democrats on one side, and the bloc of monarchists, clericals, anti-Semites and nationalists on the other. In 1899, under pressure of public opinion, Dreyfus was pardoned and released. In 1906 the Court of Cassation acquitted Dreyfus and reinstated him in the army. p. 146

- <sup>101</sup> The *Beilis case*—the trial of the Jew Beilis in 1913 in Kiev, organised by the tsarist government for provocative purposes. Beilis was accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy (actually the murder was committed by the Black Hundreds). By staging this trial the tsarist government tried to stir up anti-Semitism and provoke anti-Jewish pogroms to divert the masses from the mounting revolutionary movement throughout the country. The trial aroused the indignation of the people, and in a number of towns workers held protest demonstrations. Beilis was acquitted by the court. p. 146

- <sup>102</sup> See Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 327). p. 151

- <sup>103</sup> *Military cadets*—students of military schools in tsarist Russia. p. 151

- <sup>104</sup> The reference is to the decision adopted by the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets on June 9 (22), 1917, banning the demonstration fixed by the Bolshevik Party for June 10 (23). p. 152
- <sup>105</sup> On July 12 (25) the Provisional Government introduced capital punishment at the front. Special divisional "military revolutionary tribunals" were established, whose sentences were executed immediately after their promulgation. p. 155
- <sup>106</sup> The *Contact Commission* was set up by decision of the compromising Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet on March 8 (21), 1917, to "influence" the Provisional Government and exercise "control" over its activities. In actual fact the Contact Commission helped the government to use the authority of the Soviet to camouflage its counter-revolutionary policy and to keep the masses from taking part in active revolutionary struggle for the transfer of power to the Soviets. The Contact Commission ceased to exist in the middle of April 1917, its functions being taken over by the Executive Committee Bureau. p. 160
- <sup>107</sup> On May 17 (30), 1917, the Kronstadt Soviet passed a resolution abolishing the office of government commissar and investing the Soviet with full powers.  
The bourgeoisie and the S.R. and Menshevik press launched a slander campaign against the Kronstadt Soviet alleging that Russia had begun to disintegrate, that it was in a state of anarchy, etc.  
First the Petrograd Soviet and then the Provisional Government sent delegations (Chkheidze, Gots and others were sent by the former and Ministers Skobelev and Tsereteli by the latter) to liquidate the Kronstadt incident. In the Kronstadt Soviet the two Ministers managed to carry through a compromise decision that the commissar should be elected by the Soviet and approved by the Provisional Government. A political resolution was also passed, saying that the Kronstadt Soviet recognised the authority of the Provisional Government but adding that this "recognition certainly does not rule out criticism and the desire that the revolutionary democrats should form a new central authority and transfer all power to the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies". It ended with an emphatic protest against attempts to attribute to the Kronstadt Bolsheviks "the intention of severing Kronstadt from the rest of Russia". p. 162
- <sup>108</sup> The *Kornilov revolt*—a counter-revolutionary revolt organised by the bourgeoisie and landowners in August 1917. It was led by the tsarist general Kornilov, then Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Army. The rebels wanted to capture Petrograd, smash the Bolshevik Party, disband the Soviets, establish a military dictatorship and pave the way for the restoration of the monarchy. The revolt began on August 25 (September 7).  
Answering the call of the Bolshevik Central Committee, the Petrograd workers and the revolutionary soldiers and sailors rose to fight the rebels. The Petrograd workers promptly formed Red Guard units. Revolutionary committees were set up in a number of localities. The advance of Kornilov's troops was checked and their morale undermined by Bolshevik propaganda. Under pressure of the masses the Provisional Government had to order the arrest and trial of Kornilov and his accomplices. p. 167
- <sup>109</sup> The *Left Socialist-Revolutionaries*—the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (internationalists) formally organised at its First All-Russia Congress held from November 19 to 28 (December 2 to 11), 1917. Until then they existed as the Left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which emerged during the First World War.

At the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries constituted a majority in the Socialist-Revolutionary group, which split up on the question of participation in the Congress; the Right Socialist-Revolutionaries, acting on instructions of their Party's Central Committee, left the Congress, while the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries remained and voted with the Bolsheviks on the major items of the agenda. The Bolsheviks considered it necessary to form a bloc with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who at the time had many supporters among the peasants, and invited the Left S.R.s to enter the Soviet Government. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, however, refused. As a result of talks held in November and early December 1917 an agreement was reached on their participation in the government. They committed themselves to pursue the general policy of the Council of People's Commissars and entered into collegiums of a number of People's Commissariats.

While collaborating with the Bolsheviks, the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries differed with them on fundamental questions of socialist construction and opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat. In January and February 1918 their Central Committee launched a campaign against the conclusion of the Brest Treaty, and when it was signed and ratified by the Fourth Congress of Soviets in March, they withdrew from the Council of People's Commissars. With the development of the socialist revolution in the countryside in the summer of 1918 and the organisation of Poor Peasants' Committees the anti-Soviet tendencies of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries grew stronger. In July their Central Committee organised the assassination of the German Ambassador Mirbach in Moscow and an armed revolt against Soviet power in the hope of sabotaging the peace treaty and provoking war between Soviet Russia and Germany. The Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, held after the suppression of the July revolt, decided to expel from the Soviets the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who shared the views of their leadership. Having lost all support among the masses, the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries began an armed struggle against Soviet power. Some of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries who wanted to collaborate with the Bolsheviks formed the parties of Narodnik Communists and Revolutionary Communists, and a considerable number of them later joined the Communist Party.

p. 169

<sup>110</sup> *Rabochy* (The Worker)—Central Organ of the Bolshevik Party published daily from August 25 (September 7) to September 2 (15), 1917, instead of *Pravda*, which had been closed down by the Provisional Government.

p. 170

<sup>111</sup> In his letter "To All Comrades!" printed in No 2 of *Rabochy*, September 8 (August 26), 1917, Volodarsky refuted the report published by several newspapers, among them *Novaya Zhizn*, concerning his speech on the situation at the front, delivered on August 24 (September 6) at the sitting of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies. The newspapers distorted his speech, ascribing to him the statement that "defence is a matter of primary importance at the present moment". Refuting this statement, Volodarsky wrote that in his speech he set forth the propositions contained in the Bolshevik group's declaration on the breakthrough of the German forces on the Riga front, which sharply censured the imperialist policy of the Provisional Government and urged a revolutionary withdrawal from the war.

p. 170

<sup>112</sup> See Frederick Engels, "Programme of the Blanquist Commune Emigrants" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2., pp. 380-86).

p. 171



<sup>113</sup> See Engels's letter to Filippo Turati dated January 26, 1894 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 470). p. 171

<sup>114</sup> The reference is to the Kornilov revolt on August 27-31 (see Note 108). p. 172

<sup>115</sup> The "*Draft Resolution on the Present Political Situation*" was written by Lenin for the plenary meeting of the Party's Central Committee fixed for September 3 (16). However, instead of a plenum, there was a regular meeting of the C.C. which did not discuss the political situation. The available records of the C.C. R.S.D.L.P.(B.) for 1917 contain no indication of the draft having been discussed by the Central Committee. p. 176

<sup>116</sup> The *Sixth Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.)* was held in Petrograd from July 26 to August 3 (August 8 to 16), 1917.

The main items on the agenda were the political report of the Central Committee and the report on the political situation. The Congress advanced the slogan of preparing an armed uprising against the Provisional Government and of the seizure of power by the proletariat. The Congress decisions laid special emphasis on Lenin's thesis of the proletariat's alliance with the poor peasants as a most important condition for the victory of the socialist revolution. The Congress gave a firm rebuff to the Trotskyites who opposed the Party's course for the socialist revolution and denied the possibility of the victory of socialism in Russia until the victorious proletarian revolution in Western Europe. The Congress adopted the economic platform of the Bolshevik Party and approved the new Party Rules. It passed a resolution against Lenin's appearing in a court of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Government.

In a manifesto published in its name, the Congress called on the workers, soldiers and peasants to gather strength and prepare, under the banner of the Bolshevik Party, for the decisive battle with the bourgeoisie. p. 176

<sup>117</sup> The *Savage Division* was made up of volunteers from among the mountain peoples of the North Caucasus during the First World War. p. 178

<sup>118</sup> The *All-Russia Democratic Conference* was called by the Menshevik and S.R. Central Executive Committee of the Soviets to decide the question of power. The date fixed for it was September 12 (25), 1917, but it was postponed and held in Petrograd from September 14 to 22 (September 27 to October 5). The Menshevik and S.R. leaders did everything possible to reduce the representation of the workers and peasants and increase the number of delegates from various petty-bourgeois and bourgeois organisations so as to ensure a majority at the Conference. The Bolsheviks attended the Conference with the aim of exposing the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The Democratic Conference decided to set up a Pre-parliament (Provisional Council of the Republic), which, according to the regulations approved by the Provisional Government, was to be a consultative body under the government.

Lenin criticised the Bolsheviks' tactical mistakes with regard to the Democratic Conference. He insisted on their withdrawal from the Pre-parliament and emphasised the need to concentrate all efforts on preparing for an uprising. The Party's Central Committee discussed Lenin's proposal and, in spite of the resistance of Kamenev, Rykov and other capitulators who insisted on participation, decided that the Bolsheviks should withdraw from the Pre-parliament. On October 7 (20), the opening day, the Bolsheviks read their declaration and withdrew. p. 186

- <sup>119</sup> *Kit Kitych* (literally, Whale Whaleson) — the nickname of Tit Titych, a rich merchant in A. N. Ostrovsky's comedy *Shouldering Another's Troubles*. Lenin applies the nickname to capitalist tycoons. p. 186
- <sup>120</sup> *Dyen* (Day) — a liberal-bourgeois daily published in St. Petersburg from 1912 to October 1917. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution it became the organ of the Menshevik liquidators. p. 191
- <sup>121</sup> *Svobodnaya Zhizn* (Free Life)—a Menshevik daily published in Petrograd in September 1917, instead of *Novaya Zhizn*, which had been closed down by the Provisional Government (see Note 83). p. 206
- <sup>122</sup> At its plenary meeting on August 31 (September 13), 1917, the Petrograd Soviet adopted for the first time a Bolshevik resolution emphatically rejecting the policy of compromise with the bourgeoisie. The resolution was passed by a majority of 279 to 115, with 50 abstentions. It called for the transfer of all power to the Soviets and outlined a programme of revolutionary changes in the country. A few days later the Bolshevik Party won yet another major victory. On September 5 (18) the Moscow Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies carried a similar Bolshevik resolution by a majority of 355 votes. p. 217
- <sup>123</sup> *Vendée*—a province in France which was the centre of counter-revolution during the French bourgeois revolution of the eighteenth century. It has become a synonym of counter-revolution. p. 230
- <sup>124</sup> Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* in August and September 1917, when he was in hiding because of the persecution by the Provisional Government

The question of the character of proletarian state power especially engaged Lenin's attention during the last years of his emigration. He first spoke of the need for a theoretical treatment of the question of the state in the second half of 1916, considering it necessary to oppose the distortion of Marx's theory of the state by Karl Kautsky and other opportunists of international Social-Democracy. "What we have on the order of the day," Lenin wrote to A. G. Shlyapnikov, "is not only the *continuation* of the line (against tsarism, etc), consolidated in our resolutions and the pamphlet . . . but also its purging from the present absurdities and the muddle of rejection of democracy (including disarmament, rejection of self-determination, the theoretically incorrect rejection of defence of the fatherland in principle, vacillations on the question of the role and significance of the state, etc)."

In the second half of 1916 N. I. Bukharin published several articles in which he defended anti-Marxist, semi-anarchist views on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin sharply criticised Bukharin's stand in his review "The Youth International" written in December 1916 and promised a more detailed article on the Marxist attitude to the state. On February 4 (17), 1917, Lenin wrote to A. M. Kollontai that he had almost got the material on the question ready. This material was written in a notebook headed "Marxism on the State". It contained quotations from Marx and Engels and passages from books and articles by Kautsky, Pannekoek and Bernstein, with critical comments, conclusions and generalisations by Lenin.

Lenin used the material he had collected as a basis for his book *The State and Revolution*.

According to Lenin's plan, *The State and Revolution* was to consist of seven chapters. However, the seventh and last chapter, "The Experience

of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917", was never written, and there are only detailed plans for it and for the conclusion.

The book was first published in 1918, after the October Socialist Revolution. A second edition, with a new section, "The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852", added by the author to Chapter II, appeared in 1919. p. 238

- <sup>125</sup> See Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 326-27).

Further below, on pp. 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, Lenin quotes from the same work (op. cit., pp. 327-30). p. 241

- <sup>126</sup> See Karl Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Section IV (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 25-30), and Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 332-33, and also Engels's letter to August Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 31-37). p. 251

- <sup>127</sup> See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 703. p. 251

- <sup>128</sup> The *Thirty Years' War* (1618-48)—a general European war which resulted from an aggravation of the contradictions between various alignments of European states and took the form of a struggle between the Protestants and Catholics. At its first stage the war was characterised by resistance to the reactionary forces of feudal absolutist Europe, but later, especially beginning with 1635, it took the form of repeated invasions of Germany by rival foreign states. It ended in 1648 with the signing of the Peace Treaty of Westphalia, which confirmed the political dismemberment of Germany. p. 252

See Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, p. 220. p. 252

- <sup>130</sup> The *Gotha Programme*—the programme adopted by the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany in 1875, at its Gotha Congress, which united the two German Socialist parties: the Eisenachers—led by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht and ideologically influenced by Marx and Engels—and the Lassalleans. The programme was characterised by eclecticism and opportunism, because the Eisenachers made concessions to the Lassalleans on major issues and accepted Lassallean formulations. Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* and Engels in his letter to August Bebel of March 18-28, 1875, severely criticised the draft of the Gotha Programme, regarding it as a big step backward compared with the Eisenach Programme of 1869. p. 252

- <sup>131</sup> At the turn of the century the ruling bourgeois circles in a number of countries resorted to a manoeuvre in order to split the working-class movement and divert the proletariat from the revolutionary struggle by small concessions: they offered some reformist leaders of Socialist parties posts in reactionary bourgeois governments. In 1892 John Burns was elected to the English Parliament and in 1899 the French Socialist Alexandre Etienne Millerand joined the reactionary bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau and helped the bourgeoisie pursue its policy. Millerand's participation in the bourgeois government did great harm to the working-class movement in France. Lenin characterised Millerandism as apostasy and revisionism. In Italy the Socialists Leonida Bissolati, Ivanoe Bonomi and others at the beginning of the twentieth century openly supported collaboration

with the government. In 1912 they were expelled from the Socialist Party

During the First World War the Right-wing, opportunist leaders of the Social-Democratic parties in a number of countries openly took the stand of social-chauvinism, joined their bourgeois governments and helped them to pursue their policy. p. 255

- <sup>132</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*—a theoretical journal of the German Social-Democratic Party published in Stuttgart from 1883 to 1923. p. 261

- <sup>133</sup> The reference is to "The Second Address of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association on the Franco-Prussian War to Members of the International Workingmen's Association in Europe and the United States" written by Marx in London, between September 6 and 9, 1870 (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 195-201). p. 263

- <sup>134</sup> See Marx's letter to Ludwig Kugelmann dated April 12, 1871 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 420-21). p. 263

- <sup>135</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 217-21).

Further below, on pp. 269, 270, 274-75, 277-78, Lenin quotes from the same work (op. cit., pp. 222, 220-21). p. 267

- <sup>136</sup> The *Girondists*—a bourgeois political grouping during the French bourgeois revolution of the eighteenth century. They expressed the interests of the moderate bourgeoisie, vacillating between revolution and counter-revolution and compromising with the monarchy. p. 277

- <sup>137</sup> See Frederick Engels, *The Housing Question* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 295-375).

Further below, on pp. 243-47, Lenin quotes from the same work (op. cit., pp. 317-18, 370, 355). p. 279

- <sup>138</sup> *Proudhonism*—an unscientific, anti-Marxist trend in petty-bourgeois socialism, named after its ideologist, the French anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon. He criticised big capitalist property from petty bourgeois positions and dreamed of perpetuating petty property ownership. He proposed the foundation of people's and exchange banks, with the aid of which workers would be able to acquire the means of production, become handicraftsmen and ensure the "just" marketing of their products. Proudhon did not understand the historical role of the proletariat, opposed the class struggle, the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and, as an anarchist, denied the need for the state.

Marx and Engels waged a persistent struggle against the Proudhonists' efforts to impose their views on the First International. p. 281

- <sup>139</sup> The reference is to the articles "L'indifferenza in materia politica" by Karl Marx and "Dell' Autorita" by Frederick Engels, published in the Italian collection *Almanacco Repubblicano per l'anno 1874* in December 1873 and subsequently, in 1913, in German in *Die Neue Zeit* (see Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Berlin, 1969, Bd. 18, S. 299-304, and Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 376-79). p. 281

- <sup>140</sup> See Karl Marx, "Der politische Indifferentismus" (Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 18, S. 299-304). p. 281

- <sup>141</sup> See Frederick Engels, "On Authority" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 378). p. 282

- <sup>142</sup> See Frederick Engels, "On Authority" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 378-79). p. 283
- <sup>143</sup> See Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 13-30). p. 284
- <sup>144</sup> The reference is to Marx's work *The Poverty of Philosophy* (see *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Moscow, 1973). p. 284
- <sup>145</sup> See Frederick Engels, "A Critique of the Draft Social-Democratic Programme of 1891" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Work*, Vol. 3, p. 432).  
Further below, on pp. 286, 287, 288-89, 289-90 and 291, Lenin quotes from the same work (op. cit., pp. 433-36). p. 286
- <sup>146</sup> The *Anti-Socialist Law* (Exceptional Law Against the Socialists) was enacted in Germany by the Bismarck government in 1878 to fight the working-class and socialist movement. Under this law, all Social-Democratic Party organisations, all mass organisations of the workers and the working-class press were banned, socialist literature was subject to confiscation, and the Social-Democrats were persecuted and banished. In 1890 popular pressure and the growing working-class movement led to the repeal of the Anti-Socialist Law. p. 288
- <sup>147</sup> See Frederick Engels, Introduction to Marx's *The Civil War in France* (see Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2).  
Further below on pp. 292-96, 298, Lenin quotes from the same work (op. cit., pp. 179-80, 184, 187-89). p. 292
- <sup>148</sup> The reference is to a speech made by the Menshevik Tsereteli, Minister of the Provisional Government, on June 11 (24), 1917, at a joint meeting of the Presidium of the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets, the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, and the bureaus of all the Congress groups. Tsereteli took the floor during the discussion of the question of the peaceful demonstration of Petrograd workers and soldiers scheduled by the Bolsheviks for June 10 (23). His speech was slanderous and counter-revolutionary. He accused the Bolsheviks of a conspiracy against the government and of collaboration with the counter-revolutionaries, and threatened to take radical measures to disarm the workers who followed the Bolsheviks. p. 292
- <sup>149</sup> The *Los-von-Kirche-Bewegung* (the Leave-the-Church Movement) assumed a vast scale in Germany before the First World War. In January 1914 *Die Neue Zeit* began, with the revisionist Paul Göhre's article "Kirchenaustrittsbewegung und Sozialdemokratie" ("The Movement to Secede from the Church and Social-Democracy"), to discuss the attitude of the German Social-Democratic Party to the movement. During the discussion prominent German Social-Democratic leaders failed to rebuff Göhre, who maintained that the Party should remain neutral towards the Movement to Secede from the Church and forbid its members to carry on propaganda against religion and the church on behalf of the Party. p. 293
- <sup>150</sup> The figures Lenin gives for the possible salaries are expressed in the paper currency circulating in the second half of 1917.  
The paper ruble in Russia was considerably depreciated during the First World War. p. 294

- <sup>151</sup> The *Lassalleans*—members of the General Association of German Workers founded in 1863 by the prominent German Socialist Ferdinand Lassalle. The foundation of a mass political party of the working class was a big step forward in the development of the working-class movement in Germany. However, Lassalle and his followers took an opportunist stand on the fundamental questions of theory and tactics. The Association's political programme was declared to be the struggle for universal suffrage, and its economic programme, the setting up of workers' production associations to be subsidised by the state.  
In their practical activities, Lassalle and his followers adapted themselves to the hegemony of Prussia and supported the Great Power policy of Bismarck. Marx and Engels frequently and sharply criticised the theory, tactics and organisational principles of the Lassalleans as an opportunist trend in the German working-class movement. p. 296
- <sup>152</sup> See Frederick Engels, "Vorwort zur Broschüre *Internationales aus dem 'Volksstaat' (1871-1875)*" (Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 22, Berlin, 1963, S. 417-18). p. 297
- <sup>153</sup> The reference is to the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. p. 297
- <sup>154</sup> See Karl Marx "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 26).  
Further below, on pp. 300, 305-08, Lenin quotes from the same work (op. cit., pp. 17-19). p. 300
- <sup>155</sup> See Karl Marx. *The Civil War in France* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 221). p. 302
- <sup>156</sup> See Engels's letter to August Bebel, dated March 18 28, 1875 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 35). p. 302
- <sup>157</sup> *Shylock*—a character in Shakespeare's comedy *The Merchant of Venice*, a cruel and hard-hearted money lender who insisted on a pound of flesh according to the bond signed by his insolvent debtor. p. 309
- <sup>158</sup> The reference is to the seminary students who won notoriety by their extreme ignorance and barbarous customs. They were portrayed by N. G. Pomyalovsky, a Russian author, in his *Sketches of Seminary Life*. p. 309
- <sup>159</sup> See Frederick Engels's Foreword to Karl Marx's "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 9). p. 314
- <sup>160</sup> *Zarya* (Dawn)—a Marxist scientific and political journal published legally in Stuttgart in 1901-02 by the editors of *Iskra*.  
The journal criticised international and Russian revisionism and defended the theoretical principles of Marxism. p. 315
- <sup>161</sup> The reference is to the *Fifth World Congress of the Second International*, which met in Paris from September 23 to 27, 1900. On the fundamental issue, "The Winning of Political Power, and Alliances with Bourgeois Parties", the discussion of which was prompted by Millerand's entering the Waldeck-Rousseau counter-revolutionary government, the Congress by a majority vote passed a resolution tabled by Kautsky which said that "the entry of a single Socialist into a bourgeois Ministry cannot be considered as the normal beginning for winning political power, but merely as a temporary and exceptional makeshift in an emergency situation". Subsequently the opportunist

ists often referred to this paragraph of the resolution to justify their collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

*Zarya* No. 1 for April 1901 published an article by G. V. Plekhanov entitled "A Few Words About the Latest World Socialist Congress in Paris. An Open Letter to the Comrades Who Have Empowered Me", which sharply criticised Kautsky's resolution. p. 315

- <sup>162</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* and Marx and Engels, Preface to the German edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written in 1872 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 217 and Vol. 1, p. 99). p. 316

- <sup>163</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 477) p. 316

- <sup>164</sup> See Marx and Engels, Preface to the German edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written in 1872 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 98-99). p. 317

- <sup>165</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 220). p. 319

- <sup>166</sup> Kautsky's pamphlet was published in Russian only in 1918. p. 319

- <sup>167</sup> See Marx and Engels, "Address of the Central Committee to the Communist League" (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 183) p. 322

- <sup>168</sup> See Karl Marx, *The Civil War in France* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 220). p. 323

- <sup>169</sup> The reference is to *Industrial Democracy* by Sydney and Beatrice Webb. p. 324

- <sup>170</sup> See Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 126). p. 325

- <sup>171</sup> *Socialist Monthly* (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*)—a journal, central organ of the German opportunists and a mouthpiece of international revisionism. It was published in Berlin from 1897 to 1933. p. 326

- <sup>172</sup> *Jaurès, Jean*—a French Socialist who advocated revision of the fundamental principles of Marxism and preached class collaboration between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In 1902 his followers formed the French Socialist Party, which pursued a reformist policy. In 1905 it united with the Socialist Party of France, led by Guesde, to form the French Socialist Party.

On the outbreak of the First World War the followers of Jaurès, who prevailed in the leadership of the French Socialist Party, openly supported the imperialist war and adopted a social-chauvinist stand. p. 326

- <sup>173</sup> See Note 30. p. 326

- <sup>174</sup> *May 6*: announcement of the first coalition Provisional Government.

*August 31*: the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies passed a Bolshevik resolution calling for the establishment of a Soviet government.

*September 12*: the date set by the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, dominated by Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, for the convocation of a Democratic Conference. p. 328

- <sup>175</sup> On August 12 (25), 1917, a conference opened in Moscow convened by the Provisional Government to mobilise the counter-revolutionary forces and crush the revolution. On the same day the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party published a manifesto exposing the counter-revolutionary nature of the conference and calling on the working people to organise mass protest meetings.  
The strike, organised on August 12 (25) in Moscow by decision of the Moscow Party Committee, involved over 400,000 people. The strike of Moscow workers frustrated the designs of the counter-revolutionary forces. Protest meetings and strikes were held also in other cities. p. 328
- <sup>176</sup> See Frederick Engels, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 377) p. 329
- <sup>177</sup> The *Alexandrinsky Theatre* in Petrograd was the place where the Democratic Conference held its sittings.  
The *Peter and Paul Fortress* served as a state prison for the tsar's political opponents. It had a large arsenal and was strategically situated. p. 335
- <sup>178</sup> *Rabochy Put* (The Workers' Path)—a daily newspaper, Central Organ of the Bolshevik Party, published from September 3 (16) to October 26 (November 8), 1917, in place of the newspaper *Pravda* which had been closed down by the Provisional Government. On October 27 (November 9) *Pravda* resumed publication under its original name p. 336
- <sup>179</sup> *Lieberdants*—an ironical nickname which stuck to the Menshevik leaders Lieber and Dan and their followers after Demyan Bedny's feuilleton under that title appeared in *Sotsial-Demokrat*, a Bolshevik newspaper published in Moscow. p. 339
- <sup>180</sup> *Calends*—an ancient Roman word meaning the first day of a month. The name did not exist in Greek. Hence "On the Greek calends" meant never. p. 341
- <sup>181</sup> The reference is to the revolutionary action by German sailors in August 1917 under the leadership of a revolutionary sailors' organisation which numbered 4,000 members in late July 1917. It was headed by the seamen Max Reichpietsch and Albin Kobis of the *Friedrich der Grosse*. The organisation decided to fight for a democratic peace and prepare for an uprising. Manifestations began in the navy in early August. Sailors of the warship *Prinze-Regent Luitpold* which was at Wilhelmshaven, took absence without leave to fight for the release of their comrades who had earlier been arrested for staging a strike; on August 16 the firemen of the *Westphalia* refused to work; at the same time the crew of the cruiser *Nürnberg*, which was out at sea, staged an uprising. The sailors' movement spread to the ships of several squadrons at Wilhelmshaven. The revolutionary actions in the German fleet were put down with great severity. Reichpietsch and Kobis were shot and other active participants were sentenced to long terms of hard labour. p. 342
- <sup>182</sup> The reference is to the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries. See Note 109. p. 343
- <sup>183</sup> The reference is to Dubasov's speech at a meeting of the Petrograd Soviet on September 21 (October 4), 1917. Dubasov, an officer who had just returned from the front, declared: "Whatever you may say over here, the soldiers will not fight." p. 346



- <sup>184</sup> *Russkiye Uedomosti* (Russian Recorder)—a daily published in Moscow from 1863 to 1918. It expressed the views of moderate liberal intelligentsia. From 1905 it was the organ of the Right wing of the Cadet Party.  
p. 346
- <sup>185</sup> The reference is to the nation-wide strike of railwaymen for higher wages. It started on all the railways on the night of September 24 (October 7), 1917, and ended on the night of September 27 (October 10), after the Provisional Government satisfied some of the railwaymen's demands. p. 347
- <sup>186</sup> The reference is to the stand taken by Kamenev, Zinoviev, Trotsky and their followers. Kamenev and Zinoviev opposed Lenin's plan of preparing for an armed uprising on the plea that the working class of Russia was incapable of carrying out a socialist revolution. They sunk to the position of the Mensheviks, who were in favour of a bourgeois republic. Trotsky insisted that the uprising should be postponed until the Second Congress of Soviets, which would have doomed it to failure since the Provisional Government would have been able to muster the forces by the opening day of the Congress and crush the uprising.  
p. 348
- <sup>187</sup> This incident took place on June 4 (17), 1917 at a sitting of the First All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (see p. 119 of the present volume).  
p. 352
- <sup>188</sup> Quoted from Nekrasov's poem *Blessed Is the Gentle Poet*  
p. 356
- <sup>189</sup> The reference is to a character from Gogol's *Dead Souls*.  
p. 357
- <sup>190</sup> The *Bulygin Duma*—a consultative representative body which the tsarist government proposed to convene in 1905. The draft law of the institution of a consultative Duma and the regulations for the elections to the Duma were drawn up by a commission presided over by the Minister of the Interior Bulygin and were promulgated together with the tsar's manifesto on August 6 (19), 1905. The Bolsheviks boycotted the Bulygin Duma, which the government was not able to convene because of the 1905 Revolution.  
p. 357
- <sup>191</sup> *Znamya Truda* (The Banner of Labour)—a daily, organ of the Petrograd Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, published from August 1917 till July 1918.  
p. 358
- <sup>192</sup> *Uolya Naroda* (People's Will)—a daily, organ of the Right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, published in Petrograd from April till November 1917. Later it was published under other titles; was finally closed down in February 1918.  
p. 360
- <sup>193</sup> During the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 the whole French Army with the Emperor Napoleon III at its head was surrounded and taken prisoner at Sedan.  
p. 366
- <sup>194</sup> See Marx's letter to Kugelmann of April 12, 1871 (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol 2, p. 420).  
p. 375
- <sup>195</sup> *The Man in the Muffler*—the principal character of Chekhov's story of the same name, a narrow-minded philistine, afraid of any innovation, any initiative.  
p. 376

- <sup>196</sup> See Engels's letter to Sorge of February 22, 1888 (Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd 37, S 25) p 382
- <sup>197</sup> See Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol 1, pp 376-78 387
- <sup>198</sup> *Moderation and moderation*—these are the words by which Molchalín a character from Griboyedov's *What Works Woe*, a careerist and toady describes his "virtues" This expression was often used by Lenin when he spoke about the liberal bourgeoisie or social-opportunists p 387
- <sup>199</sup> Lenin refers to the following on February 28 (March 13) the February bourgeois-democratic revolution took place, September 30 (October 13) was first tentatively set by the Provisional Government for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, November 28 (December 11), 1917—the date fixed for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly p 390
- <sup>200</sup> Lenin quotes from N Sukhanov's article "Another Thunderbolt" published by the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn* (New Life)  
From August 1917 the Smolny Institute was the headquarters of the Bolshevik groups of the All-Russia Central Executive Committee and of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies In October the Revolutionary Military Committee also had its premises there p 390
- <sup>201</sup> *Russkoye Slovo* (Russian Word)—a daily, published in Moscow from 1895 till 1917 Formally a non-party newspaper, it actually defended the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie from moderately-liberal positions p 392
- <sup>202</sup> The *Congress of the Northern Region* was held in Petrograd from October 11 (24) till October 13 (26), 1917, with 94 delegates attending of whom 51 were Bolsheviks In its resolution on the current situation the Congress stressed that only the immediate transfer of full power to the Soviets in the centre and in the localities could save the country and the revolution The Congress adopted an appeal to the peasants calling upon them to support the proletariat in its struggle for power The decisions of the Congress were of great importance for the preparation organisation and rallying of all the forces for the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution p 393
- <sup>203</sup> See Frederick Engels *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol 1, pp 376-78) p 394
- <sup>204</sup> A reference to big anti-war demonstrations in Turin in August 1917 On August 21 a demonstration was started in connection with a food shortage and the following day the workers went on strike The strike became general Barricades appeared in the streets The movement assumed a political anti-war character On August 23 the suburbs of Turin were in the hands of the insurgents The Government used troops to suppress the movement and imposed martial law On August 27 the general strike was called off p 395
- <sup>205</sup> Lenin refers to Sverdlov's report to the Central Committee on October 10 (23) 1917, on a technical possibility for an armed uprising in Minsk and on the Minsk offer to send a revolutionary corps to help Petrograd p 402
- <sup>206</sup> This letter and the *Letter to the Central Committee of the RSDLP(B)* (see pp 406-13 of the present volume reflect Lenin's struggle against Zinoviev and Kamenev who tried to frustrate the C.C. decision on an armed uprising The day after their defeat at the C.C. meeting on October 10 (23), 1917 at

which the question of an armed uprising was discussed, Zinoviev and Kamenev sent a letter to the C.C. entitled "On the Current Situation". In this letter they opposed the C.C. decision on the armed uprising. Having gained no support at the enlarged meeting of the Petrograd Committee on October 15 (28), which heard their letter, and subsequently at the enlarged meeting of the C.C. where they again spoke against the armed uprising, Zinoviev and Kamenev stooped to direct treason. On October 18 (31) an item entitled "Kamenev about the 'Uprising'" appeared in the semi-Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, in which Kamenev on behalf of Zinoviev and himself spoke against the armed uprising, thus giving away to the enemy a most important secret decision of the Party. That same day Lenin wrote his "Letter to the Members of the Bolshevik Party" and on October 19 (November 1) the "Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B)". In these letters he branded Zinoviev and Kamenev's action as treason, calling them strike-breakers and demanding their expulsion from the Party. p. 406

<sup>207</sup> The reference is to Lenin's article "A Letter to Comrades" in which he disclosed the inconsistency of Kamenev's and Zinoviev's arguments against the armed uprising. p. 408

<sup>208</sup> Here and below on pp. 412-13 Lenin refers to the enlarged meeting of the C.C. R.S.D.L.P.(B.) of October 16 (29), 1917 at which Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed the decision on the armed uprising taken at the C.C. meeting on October 10 (23). p. 411

<sup>209</sup> The reference is to the speeches by Sverdlov, Stalin, Dzerzhinsky and Sokolnikov at the C.C. sitting on October 20 (November 2), 1917, during the discussion of Lenin's "Letter to the Central Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B)". (see pp. 410-13 of the present volume and Note 206). p. 414

<sup>210</sup> The Cossack demonstration or the Cossack religious procession in Petrograd was to be held on October 22 (November 4), 1917, and was considered by the counter-revolution as a review of its forces in the struggle against the mounting revolution. The Bolsheviks carried on extensive propaganda among the Cossacks, calling upon them to refrain from participating in the demonstration. The Petrograd Soviet of the Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies issued an appeal to the Cossacks. Representatives of the Cossack regiments were invited to a conference of regimental committees organised by the Petrograd Soviet in the Smolny on October 21 (November 3). At the conference the Cossacks declared that they would not go against the workers and soldiers. In the early hours of October 22 (November 4) the Provisional Government was forced to call off the demonstration. p. 414

<sup>211</sup> This letter was written in the evening of October 24 (November 6). The same night Lenin secretly arrived at the Smolny and took over the leadership of the armed uprising. p. 415

<sup>212</sup> *The Revolutionary Military Committee of the Petrograd Soviet* was set up on October 12 (25), 1917, on instructions of the C.C. of the Bolshevik Party. Its members included representatives from the C.C. of the Party, the Petrograd Committee, the Petrograd Soviet, factory committees, trade unions and military organisations. Guided by the Party C.C., the R.M.C. worked in close contact with the Bolshevik Military organisation in forming Red Guard detachments and arming the workers. The main task facing the Committee was to prepare the armed uprising in accordance with the C.C. directives. The R.M.C. carried on various activities in organising the combat forces for

the victory of the October Socialist Revolution. Its leading core was the Revolutionary Military Centre set up at the sitting of the C.C. on October 16 (29), 1917, whose work was directed by Lenin. p. 415

- <sup>213</sup> The *Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies* was held in Petrograd on October 25 and 26 (November 7 and 8), 1917. When the Congress opened there were 649 delegates present, among them 390 Bolsheviks, 160 Socialist-Revolutionaries, 72 Mensheviks, and 14 Menshevik-internationalists. More delegates arrived later.

When they saw that the majority supported the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Bundists walked out. In the morning of October 26 (November 8) the Congress heard a report on the capture of the Winter Palace and the arrest of the Provisional Government and adopted an address "To Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!" written by Lenin, proclaiming the transfer of power to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

The second sitting opened at 9 p.m. the same day, it heard Lenin's reports on peace and on land. The Congress adopted Lenin's historic decrees on peace and on land and formed the workers' and peasants' government—the Council of People's Commissars—headed by Lenin. The Left Socialist-Revolutionaries refused to enter the Soviet Government and it consisted of Bolsheviks only. The 101-man All-Russia Central Executive Committee elected by the Congress included 62 Bolsheviks, 29 Left Socialist-Revolutionaries, 6 Social-Democrat-internationalists, 3 members of the Ukrainian Socialist Party and one Socialist-Revolutionary-maximalist. The Congress also decided that the All-Russia C.E.C. could be widened by representatives from the Peasants' Soviets and army units, and from the groups that had walked out of the Congress. p. 418

- <sup>214</sup> *Chartism*—a mass revolutionary movement of the working class in Britain caused by the arduous condition of the English workers, who also lacked political rights. The movement started in the 1830s in the form of mass rallies and demonstrations which occurred with intervals till the early 1850s p. 421

- <sup>215</sup> The reference is to the manifesto of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies "To the Peoples of the World", published in the newspaper *Izvestia* No. 15, of March 15, 1917. p. 423

- <sup>216</sup> See Note 181. p. 423

- <sup>217</sup> *Izvestia Userossiiskogo Soveta Krestyanskikh Deputatov*, (*Izvestia* of All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies)—a daily, an official organ of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, put out in Petrograd from May till December 1917; it expressed the views of the Right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries. p. 426

- <sup>218</sup> *Factory lands*—lands which serf peasants who worked at the factory were attached to. This system was in force till 1861. After the Reform of 1861 these lands became the property of the factory owners.

*Entailed lands*—in pre-revolutionary Russia existed in the form of so-called entailed estates. Landlords' estates could be turned into entailed estates on the approval of a higher authority. p. 427

- <sup>219</sup> The reference is to the Bolsheviks' participation in a conference called by the Vikzhel (the All-Russia Central Committee of Railwaymen's Trade Union) for talks on the composition of the government.

The Vikzhel, which was dominated by the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, was one of the bulwarks of the counter-revolution after the triumph of the October armed uprising in Petrograd. On October 29 (November 11), 1917, it adopted a resolution calling for a so-called "uniform socialist government" to consist of representatives of all parties, "from the Bolsheviks to the Popular Socialists". The same day a conference on the composition of the government was called by the Vikzhel. The Bolshevik Central Committee decided to attend, stating that any talks on a widening of the government and the All-Russia C.E.C. could take place only on the basis of the programme for the Soviet Power adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets. Kamenev and Sokolnikov were authorised by the Central Committee to attend. The All-Russia C.E.C. also sent its representatives—Ryazanov and others.

The Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries hoped to play a leading part in a coalition government and to use it to fight the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Bolshevik representatives who attended the Conference took a conciliatory attitude and did not object to discussing the proposals tabled by the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

The question of the negotiations with the Vikzhel and the conduct of the Bolshevik delegates was discussed by the Central Committee of the Party at its sitting on November 1 (14). A C.C. resolution stated that the parties of conciliation were negotiating with a view to undermine the Soviet power and the C.C. therefore authorised Bolshevik representatives to attend the next sitting with the sole aim of exposing futile attempts to set up a coalition government and terminating the talks. The All-Russia C.E.C. discussed the progress of the talks at its sitting on the night of November 1 (14) and adopted a Bolshevik resolution drawn up in the spirit of the C.C. decision of November 1 (14). However, the opposition group of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov, Milyutin, Larin, Ryazanov and others taking a Right-wing opportunist stand, opposed their line to that of the C.C. and tried to frustrate its decision. On November 2 (15), the C.C. adopted a resolution on the opposition within the C.C. (see pp. 435-36 of the present volume). At the All-Russia C.E.C. sitting on the night of November 2 (15) following the speeches of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries demanding the revision of the C.E.C. decision on the terms of an agreement, Kamenev and Zinoviev pushed through a resolution which conflicted with the C.C. resolution of November 2 (15) and provided for a change in the composition of the government conceding that the Bolsheviks held only half of the government posts. At the C.E.C. sitting the opposition voted for the resolution. Following the ultimatum which the majority of the C.C. presented to the opposition (see pp. 437-38 of the present volume), Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov, Milyutin and Nogin withdrew from the C.C. while the last three and Teodorovich resigned from their posts of People's Commissars. They were joined by Ryazanov, Larin and some others. On November 5 or 6 (18 or 19) the C.C. once again demanded in the form of an ultimatum that Kamenev, Zinoviev, Ryazanov and Larin who opposed the C.C. decisions in non-Party organisations should discontinue their disorganising activity. On November 7 (20) the C.C. issued an appeal published in *Pravda*, to all members of the Party and to all the working classes in Russia calling the opposition deserters of the revolution. (See pp. 443-46 of the present volume).

p. 434

<sup>220</sup> The *Committee of Salvation (Committee of Public Safety)* was set up on October 25 (November 7), 1917, at the Moscow City Council to fight the Soviets in Moscow; it led the counter-revolutionary revolt of officer cadets which started on October 28 (November 10). On November 2 (15), the revolt was suppressed and the Committee of Salvation capitulated to the Moscow Revolutionary Military Committee.

p. 439

- <sup>221</sup> The question of the organisation of the Supreme Economic Council was raised immediately after the victory of the October Revolution. Speaking at an enlarged sitting of the Petrograd Trade Union Council Lenin pointed to the necessity of establishing an apparatus to manage the country's economy. The draft for the organisation of the Supreme Economic Council was drawn up by a special commission appointed by the C.P.C. During the discussion of the organisation of the Supreme Economic Council, the Bolshevik group of the All-Russia C.E.C. stressed the need to make it a militant organ of the workers' dictatorship by investing it with legislative powers. The All-Russia C.E.C. discussed the question on December 1 (14). The decree on the Supreme Economic Council was adopted and published on December 5 (18).

Lenin paid much attention to organising the Council's work. He directed its activity and delivered speeches at congress of economic councils. When large-scale industry had been completely nationalised the Supreme Economic Council became its managing body. p. 453

- <sup>222</sup> The *Ukrainian Central Rada*—a counter-revolutionary bourgeois-nationalist organisation set up at the All-Ukraine National Congress held in Kiev in April 1917 by a bloc of Ukrainian bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties and groups.

The Rada tried to build up the power of the Ukrainian bourgeoisie and landowners, to establish a Ukrainian bourgeois state with the aid of the national-liberation movement in the Ukraine. It supported the Provisional Government despite disagreements on the issue of Ukrainian autonomy.

After the victory of the October Socialist Revolution the Rada proclaimed itself the supreme organ of the "Ukrainian People's Republic" and started an open struggle against Soviet power, being one of the centres of the All-Russia counter-revolution.

The First All-Ukraine Congress of Soviets held in Kharkov in December 1917 proclaimed the Ukraine a Soviet republic and declared the Central Rada overthrown. Armed uprisings against the Central Rada for the re-establishment of Soviet power took place throughout the Ukraine in December 1917 and January 1918. In January 1918 Soviet forces launched an offensive and on January 26 (February 8) captured Kiev. The bourgeois Rada was overthrown.

Defeated and driven away from the territory of the Soviet Ukraine, the Central Rada made an alliance with German imperialists and concluded a separate peace with Germany. In March 1918 the Central Rada returned to Kiev together with the Austro-German invaders. Having realised that the Rada was absolutely incapable of suppressing the revolutionary movement in the Ukraine and delivering the necessary food, the Germans dissolved it at the end of April. p. 458

- <sup>223</sup> See Marx's letter to Bracke of May 5, 1875. (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1965, p. 296.) p. 473

- <sup>224</sup> Words of Mephistopheles from Goethe's *Faust*. p. 473

- <sup>225</sup> The *Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People* adopted by the All-Russia C.E.C. on January 5 (18) was read out by Sverdlov at the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly and submitted for approval. The counter-revolutionary majority of the Assembly rejected a motion to discuss it. On January 12 (25) it was approved by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets and subsequently formed the basis of the Soviet Constitution p. 475

- <sup>226</sup> On December 6 (19), 1917, the Finnish Diet adopted a declaration of Finland's independence. On December 18 (31), 1917, the C.P.C., in accordance with the nationalities policy of the Soviet state, issued a decree on Finland's independence.

On December 19, 1917 (January 1, 1918), the Soviet Government proposed to the Persian Government to elaborate a common plan for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Persia, in conformity with a treaty concluded between Russia and Germany, Austro-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria at Brest-Litovsk on December 2 (15).

On December 29, 1917 (January 11, 1918), the C.P.C. issued a decree on Turkish Armenia. p. 476

- <sup>227</sup> The Provisional Government postponed the convocation of the Constituent Assembly several times. In August it postponed the elections till November 12 (25). The elections to the Constituent Assembly took place after the October Socialist Revolution on November 12 (25), according to lists drawn up before the October Revolution, and the composition of the Assembly reflected the alignment of forces at the time when the bourgeoisie was in power. There was discrepancy between the will of the overwhelming majority of the people who supported the Soviet Power and the policy pursued by the S.R.-Menshevik-Cadet majority of the Constituent Assembly who expressed the interests of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. When the Constituent Assembly refused to discuss the "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People" and approve of the decrees on peace, on land and on the transfer of power to the Soviets, it was dissolved by the decision of the All-Russia C.E.C. on January 6 (19), 1918. p. 478

- <sup>228</sup> The *Theses on the Question of the Immediate Conclusion of a Separate and Annexationist Peace* were read by Lenin at a conference of the C.C. members with Party functionaries on January 8 (21), 1918. They were published on February 24, 1918, when the majority of the C.C. supported Lenin on the question of concluding peace. Lenin wrote a preface entitled: "On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace".

The Soviet Government was compelled to start separate peace negotiations because of the urgent necessity for Russia to withdraw from the war. On December 2 (15), 1917 an armistice was signed providing for the convocation of a peace conference.

The Peace Conference opened on December 9 (22), 1917 in Brest-Litovsk, and was attended by the Soviet delegation and delegations of the Quadruple Alliance (Germany, Austro-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey), who made known their governments' territorial claims to the Soviet delegation. According to their plan a part of Russia comprising a territory of more than 150,000 square kilometres was to be ceded to Germany and Austro-Hungary.

Despite the obviously predatory nature of the terms proposed by the German imperialists, Lenin insisted on the conclusion of peace because he believed that a breathing space was necessary for building up Soviet power. The position of Lenin and his followers was opposed by Trotsky and a group of "Left Communists", who insisted on breaking off the talks, put forward the reckless slogan of a "revolutionary war" and bitterly attacked Lenin and his supporters. Trotsky, who headed the Soviet delegation at the second stage of the peace talks, adopted a capitulatory position and stated that Soviet Russia would not sign any peace terms, but would cease hostilities and demobilise the Army. Trotsky's statement led to the breaking off of the peace talks. On February 18 the Germans launched an offensive along the whole front.

At the extraordinary C.C. sitting in the evening of February 1918, when the German offensive had become a fact, Lenin succeeded in getting a majority vote in favour of signing a peace treaty after a prolonged and acute controversy with Trotsky and the "Left Communists". On the morning of February 19, a wireless message was sent to the German Government stating the Soviet Government's readiness to sign a peace treaty on the terms set forth by the Germans in Brest-Litovsk.

The German Command's reply, containing even more onerous terms, was received on the morning of February 23. An intense struggle continued in the C.C. when the new German ultimatum was discussed on February 23. As a result the majority of the Party C.C. supported Lenin's proposal to sign the peace treaty immediately on Germany's terms. The Fourth Extraordinary Congress of Soviets ratified the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 14-16, 1918.

After the November Revolution in Germany (1918) the Soviet Government abrogated the predatory Brest treaty. p. 480

- <sup>229</sup> A discussion on the question of war and peace was held by the C.C. on January 11 (24), 1918, following a speech by Lenin, who was opposed by the "Left Communists" and Trotsky. In an attempt to overcome the resistance of a section of the masses who supported the advocates of revolutionary war Lenin moved a proposal that the talks should be dragged out by all possible means, and this was passed by 12 votes to one. p. 490

- <sup>230</sup> This apparently refers to the unsigned article which appeared in *Novaya Zhizn* No. 7 of January 11 (24), 1918 entitled "The Bolsheviks and the German Social Democracy". The newspaper stated that the article had been written by a prominent figure in the German Independent Social Democratic Party. p. 491

- <sup>231</sup> Lenin refers to the following words of Stalin as entered in the minutes: "Comrade Stalin believes that in adopting the slogan of a revolutionary war we play into the hands of imperialism. Comrade Trotsky's stand is not a stand. There is no revolutionary movement in the West—no facts of it—only a potential, and that is something we cannot reckon on. If the Germans start an offensive this will strengthen the counter-revolution over here."

Lenin refers to the following words from Zinoviev's speech: "Of course, we are faced with a serious surgical operation, because if we conclude a peace we shall strengthen chauvinism in Germany and for a time weaken the movement all over the West. Beyond that is another prospect—the collapse of the socialist republic." p. 492

- <sup>232</sup> The *Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies* was held in Petrograd from January 10 to 18 (23-31), 1918. When the Congress opened it was attended by 707 delegates, 441 of them being Bolsheviks. On January 13 (26) more delegates joined the Congress among them late arrivals and the delegates to the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. The final sitting was attended by 1,587 delegates.

The Congress discussed Sverdlov's report on the activity of the All-Russia C.E.C.; Lenin reported on the activity of the C.P.C. and made a concluding speech.

The Congress approved Lenin's "Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People", which later became the basis of the Soviet Constitution. A Congress resolution fully approved the policy of the All-Russia C.E.C. and the C.P.C. and expressed full trust in them. The Congress also



approved of the policy of the C.P.C. on peace and invested it with the broadest powers in this matter.

The Congress heard a report by Stalin, the People's Commissar for Nationalities Affairs, on the principles of federation of Soviet Republics and the nationalities policy of Soviet Power and adopted a resolution constituting the Russian Socialist Republic as a federation of Soviet Republics, on the basis of a free union of the peoples of Russia. The Congress approved the Soviet Government's policy on the nationalities question, and the basic provisions of the law on the socialisation of land worked out on the basis of the Decree on Land.

In the summing-up speech at the closing sitting Lenin pointed out that "the Congress opened a new epoch in world history" and by establishing the organisation of a new state power created by the October Revolution "has projected lines of future socialist construction for the whole world, for the working people of all countries".

p. 493

- <sup>231</sup> The reference is to the talks between the All-Russia Leather Workers Union with the employers. The Union demanded broader workers' representation in the Central Leather Committee and its reorganisation on democratic lines. At the beginning of 1918 the Central Committee and the district committees were reorganised as a result of the talks and the workers got two thirds of the votes. On April 6, 1918, a telegram signed by Lenin was sent to all Soviets on the need for democratising the local leather industry bodies and for strict observance of the instructions issued by the Central and district committees for the leather industry.

p. 505

- <sup>234</sup> See Marx's letter to Engels of February 12, 1870

506

- <sup>235</sup> The reference is to the anti-war demonstrations of Italian workers in Turin in August 1917 (see Note 204). The strikes by Austrian workers in January 1918 in connection with the peace talks in Brest-Litovsk were held under the slogan of a general peace and improvement of food supplies for the workers.

p. 506

- <sup>246</sup> A wireless message to the government of the German Empire on behalf of the C.P.C. was sent to Berlin on the morning of February 19. However, the reply of the German Government, containing new, even more onerous terms, was handed to the Soviet courier only on February 22, and received in Petrograd in the morning of the 23rd. In its reply the German Government demanded that the new terms should be considered within forty-eight hours. While the German government delayed the answer the German troops had continued to advance along the whole front, occupying a number of towns and coming within striking distance of Petrograd.

p. 508

- <sup>237</sup> This decree was passed by the C.P.C. on February 21, 1918 and published on February 22 in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and also issued as a separate pamphlet. The Decree was written by Lenin in connection with the breaking-off of the peace talks in Brest-Litovsk and the German offensive. An appeal by the Party and the Government roused masses of revolutionary people for the struggle against the German imperialists. The newly formed Red Army detachments heroically fought back the German invaders. A decisive rebuff was dealt at the German invaders near Narva, Pskov and Revel; the German offensive against Petrograd was stopped.

p. 509

- <sup>238</sup> The revolution in Finland broke out in mid-January 1918 in the southern industrial districts. On January 15 (28), the Finnish Red Guard captured

Helsingfors, the capital of Finland, and overthrew the reactionary bourgeois government of Svinhufvud. On January 16 (29) a revolutionary government of Finland, the Council of People's Representatives, was formed. Power in the towns and villages in the south of Finland passed over to the workers. The Svinhufvud government, which had firm position in the north of the country, asked the German Government for help. Following the intervention of the German armed forces and a bitter civil war, the revolution in Finland was crushed in May 1918. p. 514

- <sup>239</sup> Lenin has in mind the joint meeting of the Bolshevik and Left Socialist-Revolutionary groups of the All-Russia C.E.C. on February 23, 1918, which was convened to discuss the question of accepting the new German peace terms. p. 515
- <sup>240</sup> The question of the evacuation of the government and government institutions from Petrograd to Moscow in view of the German offensive against Pskov was discussed at a meeting of the C.P.C. on February 26, 1918. Lenin's draft decision was adopted by the C.P.C. with minor amendments. The final decision on making Moscow the capital of the Soviet Republic was taken by the Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in March 1918. p. 518
- <sup>241</sup> This refers to a resolution passed by the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) in which the "Left Communists" predominated temporarily, during the period of the Party's struggle for the Brest peace, by the spring of 1918 the Bureau was actually an anti-Party factional centre. The splitting anti-Soviet resolution Lenin refers to was passed at a narrow sitting of the Bureau after the Party C.C. had agreed to the new German peace terms. p. 519
- <sup>242</sup> The *Extraordinary Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)*, the Communist Party's first Congress after the victory of the October Revolution, was held in Petrograd on March 6-8, 1918. It was convened to decide finally the question of concluding peace with Germany, over which a bitter controversy was going on within the Party.
- The Congress discussed the question of revising the Programme and changing the name of the Party. Lenin delivered a report on these issues, pointing out that the name of the Party should reflect its aims. He proposed renaming the Party the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and altering its programme. Lenin's resolution was passed unanimously, as well as his proposal for the name of the Party.
- The Seventh Party Congress was of immense historical importance. It proved the correctness of the Leninist policy of gaining a peaceful respite, routed the disorganisers of the Party, the "Left Communists" and Trotskyites, and set the Communist Party and the working class to solve the basic tasks of socialist construction. p. 526
- <sup>243</sup> The reference is to the defeatist position of Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov and some other members of the Party C.C. and the Soviet Government who after the October Socialist Revolution supported the Socialist-Revolutionary demand to form a "homogeneous socialist government". p. 527
- <sup>244</sup> Lenin has in mind Trotsky's statement made during the peace talks with the German Command in Brest-Litovsk on January 29 (February 10), 1918 p. 534

- <sup>245</sup> The reference is to the publication by the Soviet Government of the secret diplomatic papers and the secret treaties concluded by the tsarist government, and subsequently by the Provisional Government, of Russia and the governments of Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Austro-Hungary and other imperialist states. On November 23, 1917 the newspapers started publishing these documents which later appeared in the *Collections of Secret Documents from the Archives of the Former Ministry for Foreign Affairs*. Seven of these collections appeared between December 1917 and February 1918. p. 534
- <sup>246</sup> The reference is to the signed oath of allegiance to the tsar that was obligatory for the deputies of the Third State Duma. The Social-Democratic deputies also signed it with the rest of the deputies because refusal to take the oath meant losing the platform in the Duma. p. 537
- <sup>247</sup> The term "field revolution on a world-wide scale" was used by V. V. Obolensky (N. Osinsky) in the "Theses on the Question of War and Peace", which he wrote for the meeting of the Party C.C. of January 21 (February 1), 1918, and which were published on March 14 in the "Left Communist" newspaper *Kommunist* No. 8. Explaining what he meant by this term, Obolensky wrote: "Revolutionary war, as a field civil war, cannot resemble in character the regular military actions of national armies when they are carrying out strategic operations . . . . Military actions assume the character of guerrilla warfare (analogous to barricade fighting) and are mixed with class agitation." p. 538
- <sup>248</sup> The *Peace Treaty of Tilsit* signed in July 1807 between France and Prussia, was very onerous and humiliating for Prussia. Prussia lost a large part of her territory, and had to pay indemnities amounting to 100 million francs; she had to curtail her army to 40 thousand men, supply Napoleon with additional armed forces and stop trading with England. p. 539
- <sup>249</sup> *Kommunist*—a daily newspaper, an organ of the "Left Communist" group published in Petrograd in March 1918 p. 539
- <sup>250</sup> Lenin evidently refers to the period between the beginning of the German offensive, February 18, and the arrival of the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk on February 28, 1918. The German offensive lasted till March 8, when the treaty was signed. p. 540
- <sup>251</sup> The *Putilov Works*—a big heavy-industry plant in Petrograd. p. 540
- <sup>252</sup> The reference is to the resolution passed by the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. on February 24, 1918. For a criticism of this anti-Party document see Lenin's article "Strange and Moustrous" (see pp. 519-25 of the present volume). p. 542
- <sup>253</sup> Lenin is referring to his talk with the French officer, Comte de Lubersac, which took place on February 27, 1918. p. 545
- <sup>254</sup> The reference is to the manifesto of the People's Commissariat for Military Affairs, which called upon all workers and peasants of the Soviet Republic to take up voluntary military training. Military training had to be voluntary because the Russian Army under the terms of the peace treaty with Germany was to be completely demobilised. p. 545
- <sup>255</sup> *Canossa*—castle in Northern Italy. In 1077, the Roman Emperor Henry IV, having been defeated by Pope Gregory VII, stood for three days in robes

of repentance before the gates of this castle to save himself from excommunication and regain his power as emperor. Hence the phrase "to go to Canossa", i.e., to repent, to humiliate oneself in face of an enemy. p. 546

- <sup>256</sup> According to Clause VI of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on March 2 (15), 1917, either side could renew hostilities at seven days' notice. The German military command violated this condition by launching an offensive along the whole front on February 18, two days after revoking the armistice. p. 547

- <sup>257</sup> According to Clause VI of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on March 3, 1918, Russia had to conclude peace with the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Central Rada. The peace negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Rada did not take place at the time. On April 29, 1918 the German occupationists supported by the Cadet and Octobrist bourgeoisie carried out a coup in the Ukraine. The Rada was overthrown and replaced by the dictatorial regime of Hetman Skoropadsky. Negotiations between the Soviet Government and the Skoropadsky Government started on May 23 and an armistice was signed on June 14, 1918. p. 547

- <sup>258</sup> March 12 was the provisional date for the convocation of the Fourth Extraordinary All-Russia Congress of Soviets to decide the question of ratifying the peace treaty. The Congress was held on March 14-16, 1918. p. 548

- <sup>259</sup> See Engels's letter to Bebel of March 18-28, 1875. (Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow 1965, p. 293). p. 552

- <sup>260</sup> *Prosveshcheniye* (Enlightenment)—a Bolshevik theoretical monthly, published in 1911-14 and 1917

*Spartak* (Spartacus)—a theoretical magazine of the Moscow area Committee of the RSDLP., published in Moscow from May to October 1918 p. 553

- <sup>261</sup> Lenin is expounding the content of *Introduction to Borkheim's Pamphlet "In Memory of the German Arch-Patriots of 1806-1807"*, written by Engels on December 15, 1887 (Marx/Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 21, S. 351). p. 554

- <sup>262</sup> The *Chemnitz Congress of the German Social-Democrats*, held on September 15-21, 1912, passed a resolution "On Imperialism", which described the policy of the imperialist states as a "bare-faced policy of robbery and aggression" and called upon the working class "to fight with redoubled energy against imperialism until it is overthrown."

On the *Basle resolution* see Note 4.

p. 556

- <sup>263</sup> Lenin has in mind the revolutionary government of Finland—the Council of People's Representatives—set up on January 29, 1918, after the Svinhufvud bourgeois government had been overthrown. In addition to the Council of People's Representatives there was also the Main Council of Workers' Organisations, which was the supreme organ of government. State power was based on the "sejms of the workers' organisations", elected by the organised workers.

Lenin's conclusion that the Soviets were not the only form of the dictatorship of the proletariat was subsequently fully confirmed. p. 558

- <sup>264</sup> At the beginning of 1918 the Bureau of International Revolutionary Propaganda of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs started publishing the Decree on Land in foreign languages. In February the decree was published in English in Petrograd in the book: *Decrees, Issued by the Revolutionary People's Government*, Vol. 1, Petrograd, February 1918. p. 562

- <sup>265</sup> N. A. Nekrasov, *Who Lives Well in Russia*. 565
- <sup>266</sup> The *Extraordinary Fourth All-Russia Congress of Soviets* was convened in Moscow on March 14-16, 1918, to decide the question of the ratification of the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. p. 569
- <sup>267</sup> The reference is to the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties, which were represented in the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies. p. 569
- <sup>268</sup> Lenin apparently connects the new turn in the development of the revolution with February 10, the date when Germany broke off the peace talks in Brest-Litovsk. This was facilitated by Trotsky's refusal to sign peace on the terms proposed by the German imperialists. p. 570
- <sup>269</sup> The reference is to the Treaty between the Russian and Finnish Socialist Republics, which was signed on March 1 by a special commission headed by Lenin. Based on recognition of Finland's state sovereignty, the treaty provided evidence of the Soviet Government's consistent adherence to the principle of the right of nations to self-determination. p. 579
- <sup>270</sup> In the manuscript, Lenin's work *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government* was headed "Theses on the Tasks of the Soviet Government in the Present Situation". Lenin's theses were discussed at a meeting of the C.C. of the Party on April 26, 1918. The C.C. unanimously approved them and passed a decision to have them published in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, and also as a separate pamphlet. In the same year the pamphlet was published in English in New York, and in French in Geneva; an abridged version in German edited by F. Platten appeared in Zurich under the title *Am Tage nach der Revolution*. p. 586
- <sup>271</sup> On November 18 (December 1), 1917, acting on Lenin's proposal, the Council of People's Commissars adopted the decision "On the Remuneration of the People's Commissars and Senior Government Employees and Officials".  
By this decision the maximum monthly salary of a People's Commissar was fixed at 500 rubles with an additional 100 rubles for every member of his family unable to work. This corresponded roughly to the worker's average monthly wage. On January 2 (15), 1918, the C.P.C. explained that the decree fixed no limit for the payment of experts, thus sanctioning higher remuneration for scientists and technicians. p. 595
- <sup>272</sup> *Uperyod* (Forward)—a Menshevik daily published in Moscow with intervals from March 1917 to February 1919; it was closed down for its counter-revolutionary activities. p. 611
- <sup>273</sup> *Nash Uek* (Our Age)—one of the names of the Cadet newspaper *Rech* (see Note 61). p. 611
- <sup>274</sup> Lenin is referring to and quoting Engels's work *Anti-Dühring* (Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1969, p. 338). p. 614
- <sup>275</sup> The "Draft Plan of Scientific and Technical Work" reflects an important stage in mobilising Russia's scientists to deal with the problems of the national economy.  
Talks with the Academy of Sciences were initiated by Lenin and the Soviet Government in January 1918. Lenin directed the work of the People's Commissariat for Education, which was conducting the talks.

At the end of March in a statement to the Soviet Government, the Academy of Sciences expressed its readiness to work in exploring the country's natural resources. Accordingly on April 12, at a meeting of the C.P.C. with Lenin in the chair, a resolution was passed setting the Academy of Sciences "the urgent task of systematically solving the problems of the correct distribution of the country's industry and the most rational utilisation of economic resources". The C.P.C. acknowledged the necessity of financing the relevant scientific research. p. 618

- 276 "Six Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" were written by Lenin on instructions of the All-Russia C.E.C. after his report on the immediate tasks of the Soviet Government had been discussed at the C.E.C. meeting on April 29, 1918. With few amendments the theses were unanimously approved by the C.C. of the Party and sent out to the local Soviets with a note that Lenin's theses "should form the basis of the work of all Soviets". p. 619

- 277 The reference is to the anti-Party group of "Left Communists" which sprang up in early 1918 in connection with the question of concluding a peace treaty with Germany (the Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk). Using Left phrases on the revolutionary war the "Left Communists" advocated the adventurist policy of involving Russia, who had no standing army, in the war with imperialist Germany, thus endangering the very existence of Soviet power.

The "Left Communists" also opposed the introduction of one-man management and labour discipline, and were against the employment of bourgeois experts in industry. The Party headed by Lenin gave a decisive rebuff to the policy of the "Left Communists". p. 622

- 278 *Kommunist*—a weekly journal, factional organ of the "Left Communists" published in Moscow from April to June 1918. p. 623

- 279 These words are from Saltykov-Shchedrin's novel "The St. Petersburg Diary of a Man from the Provinces". p. 625

- 280 From *Nozdryov*, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls* personifying the bullying type of landowner. p. 627

- 281 Lenin is quoting statements by Marx expounded by Engels in *The Peasant Question in France and Germany*. (Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1973, Vol. 3, p. 474). p. 637

- 282 Lenin is citing V. L. Pushkin's epigram about a mediocre poet who sent his verses to Phoebus, god of the sun and patron of the arts. The epigram ends with the following words:

*And while he read, the yawning Phoebus asked  
What age this rhymester had attained,  
How long such rumbling odes composed?  
"He is fifteen," Erato made reply.  
"But fifteen years?" "No more, my lord."  
"Then shall the birch be his reward!"*

p. 643

- 283 The *Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets* opened in Moscow on July 4, 1918. The Congress passed by a majority vote the Communist group's resolution expressing "complete approval of the foreign and domestic policy of the Soviet Government". The Left S.R. resolution calling for a vote of no confidence in the Soviet Government, denunciation of the Peace Treaty of

Brest-Litovsk, and a change in the foreign and domestic policy of Soviet power was rejected.

Defeated at the Congress the Left S.R.s resorted to open armed actions, and on July 6 raised a counter-revolutionary revolt in Moscow. The Congress adjourned until July 9, when it met again and heard the government's report on the events of July 6-7. It fully approved the government's resolute measures to deal with the criminal venture of the Left S.R.s.

In a resolution on the food problem the Congress endorsed the grain monopoly, stressed the need for resolute suppression of kulak resistance, and approved the establishment of poor peasants' committees. It passed the Communist group's resolution outlining essential measures for organising and consolidating the Red Army on the basis of compulsory military service by the working people.

The Congress adopted the first Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R., which legislatively consolidated the gains of the working people of the Soviet country. p. 666

<sup>284</sup> The "previous speaker" was M. A. Spiridonova, one of the Left S.R. leaders. She had delivered a supplementary report on the work of the peasant section of the All-Russia C.E.C., containing a number of counter-revolutionary attacks on the policy of the Soviet Government and the Communist Party. p. 666

<sup>285</sup> *Golos Trudovogo Krestyanstva* (Voice of the Labouring Peasantry)—a daily, published in Petrograd from November 1917 to May 31, 1919. p. 670

<sup>286</sup> The reference is to the Draft Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic which was submitted for approval to the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets.

On July 19, 1918, the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. was published as the Fundamental Law and came into force as from the date of publication. p. 672

<sup>287</sup> The reference is to a counter-revolutionary revolt of the Czechoslovak army corps organised by the imperialists of the Entente with the active participation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. The Czechoslovak corps was formed in Russia from Czech and Slovak prisoners of war, former soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army, before the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. By the agreement of March 26, 1918, the corps was granted permission to leave Russia via Vladivostok on condition that they handed in their arms and dismissed their Russian officers. But the counter-revolutionary officers of the corps, on the instructions and with the support of the imperialists of the United States, Britain and France, provoked an armed revolt of the corps late in May. Operating in close contact with the whiteguards and the kulaks, the mutineers occupied a large part of the Urals, the Volga area and Siberia, restoring the rule of the bourgeoisie everywhere

On June 11, soon after the beginning of the revolt, the Central Executive Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist groups in Russia issued an appeal to the rank and file of the corps, exposing the counter-revolutionary nature of the revolt and calling on them to end the revolt and join the Czechoslovak units of the Red Army. Realising that they had been deceived by their officers, many of the rank and file left the corps, refusing to fight against the Soviet power. Nearly 12,000 Czechs and Slovaks fought in the ranks of the Red Army. p. 675

<sup>288</sup> The reference is to the *All-Russia Extraordinary Commission of the Council of People's Commissars* headed by Felix Dzerzhinsky. It was set up on

December 7 (20), 1917, for the purpose of "ruthlessly combating counter-revolution, sabotage and profiteering". p. 675

- <sup>289</sup> The *Poor Peasants' Committees* were instituted by a decree of the All-Russia C.E.C. of June 11, 1918 on the Organisation and Supply of the Rural Poor, which encouraged the practice of setting up poor peasants' committees on initiative from below.

The committees played an outstanding part in suppressing the kulak counter-revolution, in undermining the economic power of the kulaks by partially expropriating them, in finally abolishing landed proprietorship and keeping the famine-stricken urban workers and the Red Army supplied with food. The committees took an active part in organising collective agricultural enterprises—artels and communes—which along with the state farms were the first centres of a socialist-type of economic organisation in the villages.

The work of the committees was of great importance in consolidating the alliance between the working class and the peasantry and in winning the middle peasant over to the Soviet power.

By the autumn of 1918 the committees had fulfilled their historic role in the socialist revolution. Therefore the Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, held in November 1918, proposed new elections to all volost and village Soviets. After the elections the Poor Peasants' Committees were to cease their activities and hand over all their equipment and records to the new Soviets p. 677

- <sup>290</sup> Lenin refers to the All-Russia C.E.C. decree on the Extraordinary Powers of the Food Commissar. This decree provided for centralisation of food supplies and their distribution and for measures to organise workers' grain campaigns and help the poor peasants to fight the kulaks. p. 680

- <sup>291</sup> The *Committee of International Relations* was set up by the French internationalists in January 1916.

Due to the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia and the growing French working-class movement the committee became a centre for rallying the revolutionary-internationalist elements. In 1920 it merged with the French Communist Party. p. 683

- <sup>292</sup> The session was called in connection with the difficult military and economic situation in the Soviet Republic. A unanimous resolution was passed on Lenin's report, moved by the Communist group. The resolution acknowledged that the Socialist Fatherland was in danger, and demanded that the activity of all organisations of the working people should be subordinated to the needs of the Republic's defence, that an extensive campaign should be carried out to explain the situation to the masses, that vigilance should be enhanced in respect of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, that a number of government officials should be transferred to work in the army and the food industry, and a resolute struggle organised for the supply of grain. p. 686

- <sup>293</sup> *Průkopník Svobody* (Pioneer of Freedom)—a weekly newspaper, central organ of the Czechoslovak Communist groups in Soviet Russia; published in Moscow from June 1918 to May 1919.

Lenin refers to the article "The French Millions" published in this paper on June 28, 1918. p. 687

- <sup>294</sup> The reference is to the counter-revolutionary revolt of the Left S.R.s on July 6-7, 1918, when the Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets was in session. p. 688



- <sup>295</sup> The *Dashnaksutyun Party*—an Armenian nationalist party, founded in the early 1890s with the aim of liberating the Turkish Armenians from Turkish domination.

After the October Socialist Revolution the Dashnaks formed a counter-revolutionary bloc with the Mensheviks, S.R.s and Mussavatists against the Soviet power. Between 1918 and 1920 they headed the counter-revolutionary bourgeois nationalist government of Armenia. Their activity tended to turn Armenia into a colony of foreign imperialists and a bridgehead for the British and French interventionists and Russian whiteguards against the Soviet Republic. Led by the Bolshevik Party and supported by the Red Army units, the working people of Armenia overthrew the Dashnak government in November 1920. After the victory of the Soviet power in the Transcaucasus the Dashnaksutyun organisations were suppressed. p. 688

- <sup>296</sup> On July 25, 1918, an emergency session of the Baku Soviet discussed the political and military situation in the city in connection with the Turkish offensive. Under the pretext of defending Baku, the Mensheviks, Dashnaks and S.R.s demanded that British troops be called in "to help". The Bolshevik leaders of the Soviets in Baku resolutely rejected these treacherous demands. But despite the efforts of the Bolsheviks a resolution to call in British troops was passed by a small majority.

On July 27 the Baku City Conference of the Bolsheviks decided not to relinquish power without a fight, to organise with haste the defence of Baku, to declare general mobilisation and call upon the workers to defend the city and the Soviet power.

However, the heroic efforts of the Communists of Azerbaijan and the advanced part of the Baku proletariat were frustrated by the treachery of the Dashnaks, S.R.s and Mensheviks. The Dashnak units left the front and the Turkish troops advanced through the gaps thus formed. On July 31, under the onslaught of the foreign interventionists and their agents Soviet power in Baku was temporarily defeated.

The Entente agents—S.R.s, Mensheviks and Dashnaks—formed a counter-revolutionary government, the so-called Dictatorship of the Central Caspian Area. The Soviet leaders in Azerbaijan were arrested. On the night of September 20 twenty-six Baku commissars (S. G. Shaumyan, M. A. Azizbekov, P. A. Djaparidze, I. T. Fioletov, Y. D. Zevin, G. N. Korganov, M. G. Vezirov and others) were shot by the British interventionists with the direct connivance of the S.R.s and Mensheviks. p. 690

- <sup>297</sup> The October Socialist Revolution had a great influence on the development of the revolutionary movement in Germany. The excessive demands made by the German Government at the peace talks with the Soviet delegation in Brest-Litovsk aroused the indignation of the German workers and prompted a general political strike in late January and early February 1918.

Lenin considered this strike as a turning point in the attitude of the German proletariat. p. 692

- <sup>298</sup> This refers to the whiteguard revolt in Yaroslavl which began on July 6, 1918. It was organised by the counter-revolutionary Union for the Defence of the Country and Freedom led by the Right SR, B. V. Savinkov. The revolt, like other counter-revolutionary revolts in Soviet Russia at the time, was prepared by the imperialists of the Entente with the active participation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. It was part of the general plan of intervention in Russia. It was timed to coincide with the revolt of the Left S.R.s in Moscow. On July 21, 1918, the revolt was suppressed. p. 693

- <sup>299</sup> Lenin refers to the decree of the C.P.C. on the nationalisation of large-scale industry, approved on June 28, 1918. By this decree all big industrial enterprises with a fixed capital of 200,000 to one million rubles and more were nationalised. All privately-owned railways and municipal services (water supply, gas, trams, etc.) were nationalised and placed under the local Soviets. p. 695
- <sup>300</sup> Lenin refers to the towns and areas occupied by the Czechoslovak troops, where whiteguard governments had been formed with Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary participation. These governments perpetrated mass atrocities. p. 701
- <sup>301</sup> The reference is to the C.P.C. decision of August 6, 1918, On Fixed Prices for Grain Harvested in 1918, providing for a three-fold increase in grain procurement prices. p. 703
- <sup>302</sup> The dispatch of the letter to the United States was organised by the Bolshevik M. M. Borodin, who had recently been there. The letter was delivered by P. I. Travin (Sletov). With the letter he took copies of the Constitution of the R.S.F.S.R. and the text of the Soviet Government's Note to President Wilson demanding an end to the intervention.  
In December 1918 the letter was published in English (slightly abridged) in the periodicals of the Left-wing of the American Socialist Party, the New York magazine *The Class Struggle* and the Boston weekly *The Revolutionary Age*, in the publication of which John Reed and Sen Katayama took part. Subsequently it appeared as a pamphlet and was reprinted many times in the American and West European press. p. 704
- <sup>303</sup> In April 1898 the U.S. imperialists, trying to exploit for their own ends the national liberation movement against the Spanish colonisers in Cuba and the Philippines began a war against Spain. Under pretext of helping the people of the Philippines, who had proclaimed an independent republic they landed troops in the Philippines. According to the peace treaty signed in Paris in December 1898 defeated Spain renounced her rights to the Philippines in favour of the U.S.A. In February 1899 the American imperialists treacherously attacked the Philippine Republic. Guerrilla warfare was launched against the invaders, but as the peasants linked their fight for independence with the struggle for land and better conditions the frightened bourgeoisie and landowners came to an agreement with the US imperialists. In 1901 the national liberation movement in the Philippines was suppressed and they became a U.S. colony. p. 705
- <sup>304</sup> *Appeal to Reason*—an American Socialist newspaper, founded in 1895. It propagated socialist ideas and was very popular among the workers.  
Debs's article was published in this paper on September 11, 1915. Its title, which Lenin probably quoted from memory, was "When I Shall Fight". p. 710
- <sup>305</sup> *Jupiter* and *Minerva*—Ancient Roman gods. *Jupiter*—the god of the sky, light and rain, later the supreme god of the Romans; *Minerva*—the goddess of war, the arts, sciences and handicrafts. According to mythology Minerva was born out of Jupiter's head. p. 714
- <sup>306</sup> At this sitting Lenin delivered a report on the international situation. This was his first appearance in public after his illness. The resolution published here was approved at the sitting, and subsequently endorsed with slight

amendments by the Sixth Congress of Soviets on the basis of Lenin's report on the international situation. p. 716

- <sup>307</sup> Lenin quotes Pitirim Sorokin's letter as published in *Pravda* (No. 251 of November 20, 1918), where it was erroneously said that the letter was originally published in *Izvestia of the North Dvina Executive Committee*. Actually the newspaper of the North Dvina Gubernia Executive Committee was called *Krestyanskiye i Rabochiye Dumy*. The letter appeared in issue No. 75 on October 29, 1918. p. 718

- <sup>308</sup> The *Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies* was held in Moscow from November 6 to 9, 1918. Its opening coincided with the celebration of the anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution.

Lenin made reports on the anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution and the international situation. The Congress unanimously endorsed a resolution, written by Lenin and adopted at the joint sitting of the All-Russia C.E.C., the Moscow Soviet, factory committees and trade unions on October 22, 1918 (see pp. 716-17 of the present volume). The Congress adopted an appeal to the governments of the countries waging war against Soviet Russia proposing to start peace negotiations, and also a number of resolutions: on revolutionary legality, on Soviet construction and on merging the Poor Peasants' Committees with the volost and village Soviets.

The Congress summed up the results achieved by the Soviet power in the first year of its existence and drew up a programme of work for the Soviet Government in the near future p. 724

- <sup>309</sup> Lenin has in mind the resolution passed by the extraordinary congress of the Moscow People's Bank shareholders on November 16, 1918, and directed against the proposed nationalisation. Under the decree of the C.P.C. of December 2, 1918, the Moscow People's Bank was nationalised and all its assets and liabilities were transferred to the R.S.F.S.R. National Bank. The Board of the Moscow People's Bank was reorganised into the co-operative department of the Central Board of the National Bank of the R.S.F.S.R. p. 724

## NAME INDEX

### A

*Abramovich, R. (Rein Rafail Abramovich)* (1880-1963)—one of the leaders of the Bund; in 1917 joined the Right wing of the Menshevik internationalists; after the October Socialist Revolution opposed Soviet power.—446

*Adler, Friedrich* (1879-1960)—an Austrian Social-Democratic leader; in 1916 assassinated the Austrian Prime Minister Stürgkh in protest against the war. After the 1918 revolution in Austria sided with the counter-revolutionaries; subsequently one of the organisers of the Centrist Two-and-a-Half International (1921-23).—55

*Adler, Victor* (1852-1918)—one of the founders and leaders of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party and a leader of the Second International. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand, preached "class peace" and opposed working-class revolutionary actions — 53, 56

*Alexander I* (Romanov) (1777-1825)—Russian Emperor (1801-25)—108, 583

*Alexeyev, Mikhail Vasilyevich* (1857-1918)—tsarist general, monarchist; after the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 became Supreme Commander-in-Chief and then Chief of Staff under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Kerensky.—179, 223, 226, 514

*Alexinsky, Grigory Alexeyevich* (b. 1879)—Russian Social-Democrat; after the defeat of the Revolution of 1905-07 became an otzovist, demanding the recall of the Social-Democrat deputies from the Duma; was one of the organisers of the anti-Party *Uporyod* group. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. After the October Socialist Revolution took an active part in the counter-revolutionary struggle against the Soviet state.—132, 133, 134, 135, 141, 147, 387

*Antonov-Ovseyenko, Vladimir Alexandrovich* (1883-1938)—participant in the October Socialist Revolution, prominent military leader of the Soviet state. At the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets entered the Council of People's Commissars as a member of the Committee for Military and Naval Affairs.—430

*Avilov, N. P. (Glebov N.)* (1887-1942)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1904. After the October Socialist Revolution entered the Council of People's Commissars as People's Commissar of Posts and Telegraphs; from 1918 on held responsible posts in the army, trade-unions, the Soviets, and the Party.—430

*Avksentyev, Nikolai Dmitriyevich* (1878-1943)—one of the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, member of its Central Committee. After the February bourgeois-

democratic revolution of 1917 was Chairman of the Executive Committee of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, then Minister of the Interior in the Kerensky government and subsequently Chairman of the counter-revolutionary Provisional Council of the Russian Republic (Pre-parliament). After the October Socialist Revolution became one of the organisers of counter-revolutionary revolts against the Soviet government.—194, 246, 271, 354, 396, 479, 527

*Axlrod, Pavel Borisovich* (1850-1928)—a Menshevik leader; during the First World War a Centrist; following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet; supported the bourgeois Provisional Government and adopted a hostile attitude to the October Socialist Revolution. When living abroad as an emigré conducted propaganda for an armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—53

## B

*Bagration, Dmitry Petrovich, Prince* (b. 1863)—general of the tsarist army. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was Commander of the Caucasian Division formed from the natives; took an active part in the Kornilov revolt.—223

*Bakunin, Mikhail Alexandrovich* (1814-1876)—Russian revolutionary, an ideologist of anarchism; wrote a number of works devoted to its theory and practice. After joining the First International, Bakunin tried to split it by organising within it a secret Social-Democratic Alliance. In 1872 was expelled from the First International for his splitting activities.—276, 285, 314

*Bazarov, B. (Rudnev, Vladimir Alexandrovich)* (1874-1939)—Russian Social-Democrat, philosopher and

economist; contributed to a number of Bolshevik periodicals. After the defeat of the first Russian Revolution of 1905-07 broke with the Bolsheviks. In 1917 adhered to the Menshevik internationalists; was one of the editors of the semi-Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*. Came out against the October Socialist Revolution.—122, 373, 374, 412

*Bebel, August* (1840-1913)—an outstanding leader of the German Social-Democratic Party and the Second International. In the 1890s and at the beginning of the 1900s opposed reformism and revisionism in the German Social-Democratic movement. A talented organiser and publicist, he exerted a great influence on the German and the international working-class movement.—284, 286, 299, 302

*Belinsky, Vissarion Grigoryevich* (1811-1848)—Russian revolutionary democrat, utopian socialist philosopher and literary critic. His articles, printed in the magazines of the 1830s and 1840s, exerted a great influence on the revolutionary movement in Russia.—469

*Berger, Victor Louis* (1860-1929)—one of the founders of the Socialist Party of America. During the First World War took a pacifist position.—52

*Berkenheim, Alexander Moiseyevich* (1880-1932)—a Socialist-Revolutionary. After the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 was Chairman of the Moscow Food Committee.—354

*Bernatsky, Mikhail Vladimirovich* (b. 1876)—professor of political economy; from September 1917 Minister of Finance in the bourgeois Provisional Government.—192

*Bernstein, Eduard* (1850-1932)—leader of the extreme opportunist wing in the German Social-Democratic Party and of the Second International, ideologist of reformism

- and revisionism. Advocated the struggle for reforms to improve the workers' condition under capitalism and put forward the opportunist slogan "The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing". During the First World War took a Centrist position, disguising his social-chauvinism with internationalist phrases.—268, 274, 275, 276, 315, 316, 319, 321, 324, 331
- Bismarck, Otto, von* (1815-1898)—diplomat and statesman of Prussia and Germany; effected the unification of the separate German states into the German Empire under Prussian hegemony, Chancellor of the German Empire from 1871 to 1890—246
- Bissolati, Leonida* (1857-1920)—one of the founders of the Italian Socialist Party and leader of its Right, reformist wing. In 1912 was expelled from the Socialist Party and founded a "Social-Reformist Party". During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand urging Italy to join the war on the side of the Entente.—52, 270
- Blanc, Louis* (1811-1882)—a French petty-bourgeois socialist and historian. During the French revolution of 1848 entered the Provisional Government. Blanc's conciliatory tactics helped the bourgeoisie to divert the workers from the revolutionary struggle—221
- Bobrinsky, Uladimir Alexeyevich* (b. 1868)—Russian reactionary politician, big landowner and sugar manufacturer—193
- Bogayevsky, Mitrofan Petrovich* (1881-1918)—a leader of the counter-revolutionary Cossacks on the Don. From June 1917 to January 1918 was assistant Ataman of the Don Army commanded by General Kaledin and at the same time, from January 1918, a member of the counter-revolutionary government on the Don.—589, 593, 614, 640
- Bonaparte, Louis*—see *Napoleon III.*
- Bonaparte, Napoleon*—see *Napoleon I.*
- Borghjerg, Frederik* (1866-1936)—Danish reformist Social-Democrat, one of the leaders of the Danish Social-Democratic Party. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. In the spring of 1917 came to Petrograd to propose the convocation of a conference of socialists of the belligerent countries.—90, 108
- Bourderon, Albert* (b. 1858)—French socialist, a Left-wing leader of the French syndicalist movement. Took part in the Zimmerwald Conference, where he adopted a Centrist stand. At the 1916 Congress of the French Socialist Party voted for a Centrist resolution supporting the imperialist war. Later broke with the Zimmerwald group and sided with the enemies of the revolutionary working-class movement.—55, 57
- Bracke, Wilhelm* (1842-1880)—one of the founders and leaders of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Germany; opposed, although not always consistently, the opportunist elements in the Social-Democratic Party—284, 298
- Branting, Karl Hjalmar* (1860-1925)—opportunist leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Sweden and one of the leaders of the Second International. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand; supported the foreign military intervention against Soviet Russia.—52, 270, 326
- Breshko-Breshkovskaya, Yekaterina Konstantinovna* (1844-1934)—one of the organisers and leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, belonged to its extreme Right wing. Following the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 supported the bourgeois Provisional Government; advocated continuing the imperialist war to a "victorious conclusion".—232, 237, 238, 339, 360, 371, 382, 383, 384, 397

*Briand, Aristide* (1862-1932)—

French statesman; for some time adhered to the Left wing of the socialist movement. Held portfolios in several bourgeois governments and was Prime Minister of France (1913, 1915-17 and 1921-22); pursued a hostile policy towards the working class.—366

*Bronstein*—see *Trotsky, Lev Davidovich*.

*Bublikov, Alexander Alexandrovich*

(b. 1875)—deputy of the Fourth Duma, representing the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, member of the bourgeois Progressist Party. Attended the State Conference in Moscow in August 1917, where he advocated a coalition between the bourgeoisie and the Mensheviks.—186, 199

*Buhnov, Andrei Sergeyevich* (1883-

1940)—prominent Party functionary and Soviet statesman, Bolshevik from 1903. From 1918 held responsible posts in the Party and the army; was a member of the anti-Party group of "Left Communists".—546

*Buchanan, George William* (1854-

1924)—British diplomat. As a British Ambassador to Russia (1910-15) helped Russian reactionary circles in their struggle against the maturing revolution. In August 1917 supported the counter-revolutionary revolt of Kornilov. After the October Socialist Revolution took part in organising counter-revolutionary conspiracies and subsequently the foreign armed intervention of the Entente against Soviet Russia.—23, 233, 397

*Bukharin, Nikolai Ivanovich* (1883-

1938)—publicist and economist, member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1906, opposed Lenin on the questions of the state, proletarian dictatorship, the right of nations to self-determination and others. In 1918, during the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty with Germany, headed the anti-Party group of Left Communists; from 1929 was one of the leaders of the Right,

opportunist deviation in the Party. Was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities in 1937.—16, 544, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 554, 637-38, 639, 641, 645, 646

*Bulygin, Alexander Grigoryevich*

(1851-1919)—tsarist minister and big landowner. In 1905 headed the commission on drafting a law on the convocation of advisory Duma with the aim of checking the mounting revolutionary movement. That Duma was never convened, it was swept away by the revolution. After October 17, 1905 resigned and left the political arena—340, 357, 378

*Byelorussov, Alexei Stanislavovich*

(*Belevsky*) (1859-1919)—bourgeois publicist, Right-wing Narodnik. In 1918 was on the Council under Kornilov as a representative of the Moscow underground counter-revolutionary centre.—607

## C

*Carlexon, Carl Nataniel* (1865-1929)

—Swedish Left Social-Democrat; during the First World War adopted an internationalist stand, was editor of the newspaper *Politiken*, organ of the Left opposition in the Swedish Social-Democratic Party. In 1917 joined the Communist Party of Sweden but in 1924 adhered to the opportunist group led by Höglund, withdrew from the Communist Party and rejoined the Social-Democrats.—55

*Cavaignac, Louis Eugène* (1802-

1857)—French general and reactionary politician. In June 1848 headed the military dictatorship; brutally crushed the June uprising of Paris workers.—143, 150, 152, 292, 607, 633

*Chaikovsky, Nikolai Vasilyevich*

(1850-1926)—Narodnik and subsequently Socialist-Revolutionary, Popular Socialist. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolu-

tion was member of the Central Committee of the United Labour Popular Socialist Party and member of the Executive Committees of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the All-Russia Soviet of Peasants' Deputies. After the October Socialist Revolution organised anti-Soviet revolts and co-operated with the foreign interventionists against Soviet Russia.—354

*Chernov, Viktor Mikhailovich* (1876-1952)—one of the leaders and theoreticians of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. During the First World War actually adhered to social-chauvinism, disguising it with Left phraseology. From May to August 1917 was Minister of Agriculture in the bourgeois Provisional Government and pursued a policy of severe reprisals against peasants who seized landowners' estates—64, 65, 130, 131, 143, 144, 151, 152, 156, 162, 163, 180, 186, 200, 205, 212, 222, 237, 238, 271, 296, 309, 326, 332, 333, 337, 339, 363, 378, 382, 575, 578, 579, 581, 589, 607

*Chernyshevsky, Nikolai Gavrilovich* (1828-1889)—Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, writer and literary critic; one of the outstanding forerunners of Russian Social Democracy—616, 709

*Chkhedze, Nikolai Semyonovich* (1864-1926)—a Menshevik leader; a Centrist during the First World War. During the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Provisional Committee of the Duma, and later Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Central Executive Committee, first convocation. Took a defencist position and actively supported the bourgeois Provisional Government.—21, 25, 30, 32, 35, 36, 41, 43, 52, 53, 59, 69, 81, 88, 92, 122, 125, 501

*Chkhenteli, Akaky Ivanovich* (1874-1959)—a Socialist-Democrat Men-

shevik. During the First World War took a social-chauvinist stand. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was representative of the bourgeois Provisional Government in Transcaucasia.—21, 25

*Clausewitz, Karl, von* (1780-1831)—Prussian general and prominent bourgeois military theoretician, author of works on the history of the Napoleonic and other wars.—628

*Cornelissen, Christian*—Dutch anarchist, follower of Kropotkin; opposed Marxism. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—310

## D

*Dan, Fyodor Ivanovich (Gurevich)* (1871-1947)—a Menshevik leader. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee; supported the bourgeois Provisional Government—151, 363, 378, 488

*Danton, Georges Jacques* (1759-1794)—prominent leader of the French bourgeois revolution of the end of the eighteenth century, a talented speaker who enjoyed great popularity among the masses. In the crucial period of August and September 1792, when the interventionists' armies were marching on Paris, Danton displayed great energy, initiative and determination, mobilising the people for the defence of their revolutionary fatherland—387, 394

*David, Eduard* (1863-1930)—a Right-wing leader of the German Social-Democratic Party, one of the founders of the revisionist monthly *Sozialistische Monatshefte*. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—23, 238, 270, 326



*Debs, Eugene Victor* (1855-1926)—prominent leader in the U.S. labour movement, one of the organisers of the American Social-Democratic Party, which formed the core of the Socialist Party founded in 1900-01. During the First World War took an internationalist stand, condemned the treachery of the social-chauvinists and conducted propaganda against the U.S.A. joining the war.—709

*Dobrolyubov, Nikolai Alexandrovich* (1836-1861)—Russian revolutionary democrat and materialist philosopher, outstanding literary critic, one of the forerunners of revolutionary Social-Democracy in Russia.—616

*Dreyfus, Alfred* (1859-1935)—a Jewish officer of the French General Staff sentenced to life imprisonment in 1894 on a false charge of high treason. As a result of the campaign conducted in his defence by the working class and progressive intelligentsia, Dreyfus was pardoned in 1899 and rehabilitated in 1906.—146

*Dubasov*—non-partisan officer of the army in the field.—345, 390, 391

*Duhring, Eugen* (1833-1921)—German eclectic philosopher and vulgar economist; his views were an eclectic mixture of positivism, metaphysical materialism and idealism.—249

*Dutov, Alexander Ilyich* (1864-1921)—tsarist colonel, ataman of the Orenburg Cossack army; one of the leaders of the Cossacks' counter-revolutionary movement. In 1920 was routed by the Red Army.—593, 612, 614, 656

*Dybenko, Pavel Yefimovich* (1889-1938)—Soviet military leader and statesman, member of the Bolshevik Party from 1912. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Chairman of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet and took an active part in preparing the Baltic Fleet for the armed uprising in October

1917. At the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets entered the Council of People's Commissars as member of the Committee for Military and Naval Affairs. After the Civil War held responsible posts in the Red Army.—430

*Dzerzhinsky, Felix Edmundovich* (1877-1926)—outstanding leader of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1895. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution carried out Party work in Moscow. Following the victory of the October Socialist Revolution was Chairman of the All-Russia Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-revolution and Sabotage (the Vecheka).—109, 414, 675

## E

*Engels, Frederick* (1820-1895)—33, 46, 59, 60, 61, 66, 77, 119, 151, 171, 239, 240, 241, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 258, 260, 263, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 302, 307, 309, 312, 314, 316, 317, 318, 382, 507, 552, 554, 615

## F

*Fedoflaktov, A. Y.*—Left Socialist-Revolutionary, delegate to the Extraordinary Congress of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies held in November 1917, where he was elected to the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.—451  
*Furstenberg*—see *Hanecki, Yakub.*

## G

*Gegechkori, Yevgeny Petrovich* (b. 1879)—Menshevik; chairman of the counter-revolutionary Transcaucasian government from November 1917, and later Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chair-

- man of the Georgian Menshevik government; white emigré after the establishment of Soviet power in Georgia in 1921.—593, 609, 612, 614
- Ghe, Alexander* (d. 1919)—Russian anarchist. Following the October Socialist Revolution supported Soviet power.—310, 636, 641
- Goldenberg, Isif Petrovich* (1873-1922)—Russian Social-Democrat. During the First World War was a defencist and follower of Plekhanov.—32, 33
- Gompers, Samuel* (1850-1924)—one of the leaders of the U.S. trade union movement, permanent President of the American Federation of Labour since 1895; pursued a policy of class collaboration with the capitalists and opposed the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Displayed a hostile attitude to the October Socialist Revolution and the Soviet state.—715
- Gorter, Herman* (1864-1927)—Dutch Social-Democrat, publicist, one of the founders (1907) of the newspaper *De Tribune*, organ of the Left wing of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Holland. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand and supported the Zimmerwald Left—55
- Gotz, Abram Rafailovich* (1882-1940)—one of the Socialist-Revolutionary leaders. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was in the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and a member of the counter-revolutionary Committee for the Salvation of Fatherland and the Revolution. Following the October Socialist Revolution fought against Soviet power.—593, 605, 609, 612, 614
- Grave, Jean* (1854-1939)—French petty-bourgeois socialist, an ideologist of anarchism; at the beginning of the 20th century adopted a position of anarcho-syndicalism; during the First World War, a social-chauvinist—310
- Grimm, Robert* (1881-1958)—a leader of the Swiss Social-Democratic Party. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand, was one of the organisers of the Centrist Two-and-a-Half International.—53
- Guchkov, Alexander Ivanovich* (1862-1936)—big Russian capitalist organiser and leader of the Octobrist Party. During the First World War was Chairman of the Central War Industries Committee and member of the Special Conference on Defence. Following the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution entered the first bourgeois Provisional Government as Minister of the Army and Navy; in August 1917 took part in organising the Kornilov revolt. After the October Socialist Revolution fought against Soviet power.—20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 37, 41, 42, 43, 64, 68, 71, 73, 74, 81, 95, 114, 163, 230, 231, 339
- Guesde, Jules* (1845-1922)—one of the founders and leaders of the French socialist movement and the Second International; did much to spread Marxism and develop the socialist movement in France. But, opposing the policy of the Right socialists, he committed sectarian mistakes in questions of theory and tactics. On the outbreak of the First World War took a social-chauvinist position and joined the bourgeois government of France—52, 238
- Guilbeaux, Henri* (1885-1938)—French socialist. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand. In 1916 took part in the Kienthal Socialist Conference. Attended the Second Congress of the Communist International as a delegate of the Socialist Party of France. Subsequently adopted a Trotskyist stand and contributed to nationalist press organs.—55
- Gvozdyov, Kuzma Antonovich* (b. 1883)—Menshevik, liquidator.

During the First World War—a social-chauvinist, chairman of the Workers' group of the Central War Industries Committee. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, Deputy Minister and then Minister of Labour in the bourgeois Provisional Government.—21, 25, 28, 345, 364

## H

*Haase, Hugo* (1863-1919)—an opportunist leader of the German Social-Democratic Party, Centrist during the First World War. In April 1917 took part in founding the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany.—53, 54

*Hanecki, (Fürstenberg), Yakub* (1879-1937)—a prominent leader of the Polish and Russian revolutionary movement. During the First World War (1914-18) adhered to the Zimmerwald Left. After the October Socialist Revolution worked in the People's Commissariat of Finance and then as a diplomat.—55, 134

*Hartstein (Levi), Paul* (1883-1930)—German Social-Democrat, member of the Spartacus League; participated in the Zimmerwald Conference in 1915; adhered to the Zimmerwald Left; was a delegate to the Second Congress of the Communist International.—57

*Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich* (1770-1831)—classical German philosopher, objective idealist; elaborated idealist dialectics, which was one of the theoretical sources of dialectical materialism.—241

*Heilmann, Ernst* (1881-1940)—German Right Social-Democrat, publicist. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand.—57

*Henderson, Arthur* (1863-1935)—one of the leaders of the Labour Party and trade union movement in Bri-

tain. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand and joined the British bourgeois government. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution came to Russia to agitate for continuing the war. Was one of the organisers of the Berne International.—270, 715

*Hillquit, Morris* (1869-1933)—American socialist, reformist and opportunist; one of the founders of the reformist Socialist party of the U.S.A. (1901) and a member of the International Socialist Bureau. Author of reformist works on the history of socialism.—53

*Hindenburg, Paul von* (1847-1934)—German Field-Marshal and statesman, representative of the reactionary and chauvinist circles of German imperialism. During the First World War, was Commander-in-Chief of the German Army on the Eastern Front and then Chief of Staff. One of the organisers of military intervention against Soviet Russia.—581

*Hoglund, Carl Zeth Konstantin* (1884-1956)—leader of the Left wing of the Social-Democratic movement and of the youth socialist movement in Sweden. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand, joined the Zimmerwald Left group.—55

*Hohenzollern*—see *Wilhelm II.*

*Huysmans, Camille* (1871-1968)—a veteran leader of the Belgian labour movement. In 1904-19 Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau of the Second International. During the First World War took a Centrist position.—56

*Hyndman, Henry Mayers* (1842-1921)—English reformist socialist, an opportunist leader of the British Socialist Party. In 1916 left the Party after the Salford Conference condemned his support of the imperialist war as social-chauvinism. Adopted a hostile attitude to the October Socialist Revolution and

supported the foreign armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—52, 238

## I

*Isvu, Iosif Andreyevich* (1878-1920)—Menshevik. In 1917 was member of the Moscow Committee of the Menshevik Party and of the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet.—641, 642

## J

*Jaurès, Jean* (1859-1914)—prominent leader of the French and international socialist movement. By his views on the labour movement and its tasks Jaurès was a reformist but his unremitting struggle for peace, against imperialist oppression and aggressive wars caused the reactionary bourgeoisie to hate him. He was killed by hired assassins of the reactionaries on the eve of the First World War.—315, 326

*Jordania (Kostrov), Noi Nikolayevich* (1870-1953)—Social-Democrat, leader of the Caucasian Mensheviks. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Chairman of the Tiflis Soviet of Workers' Deputies and from 1918 to 1921 headed the Georgian counter-revolutionary Menshevik government.—361

*Jugashvili*—see *Stalin, Joseph Vissarionovich*.

## K

*Kaledin, Alexei Maximovich* (1861-1918)—tsarist general, ataman of the Don Cossack army. After the October Socialist Revolution was one of the leaders of the Cossacks' counter-revolutionary movement on the Don, took part in organising the whiteguard Volunteer Army and headed the Cossacks' revolt against Soviet power.—222, 231, 419, 434, 446, 498, 500, 514, 656

*Kamenev (Rosenfeld), Lev Borisovich* (1883-1936)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1901. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution opposed the Party's Leninist line towards socialist revolution. In October 1917 he published in the semi-Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, in his own name and in the name of Zinoviev, a statement expressing disagreement with the C.C. resolution on the armed uprising. This was divulgence of a secret Party decision and betrayal of the revolution. After the October Socialist Revolution held responsible posts in the Party and the Soviet government. Subsequently was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—15, 80, 81, 151, 406, 407, 410, 411, 412, 414, 434, 445

*Kamkov (Kats), B. D.* (1885-1938)—a Socialist-Revolutionary, one of the organisers and leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Opposed the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty. Took part in organising the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' revolt in Moscow in July 1918.—443, 698

*Karelin, Vladimir Alexeyevich* (1891-1938)—one of the organisers of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party and member of its Central Committee. A leader of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries' revolt in Moscow in July 1918.—443, 636, 641

*Kautsky, Karl* (1854-1938)—a leader of the German Social-Democratic Party and the Second International; originally a Marxist and later a renegade to Marxism, ideologist of Centrism, the most harmful and dangerous variety of opportunism. After the October Socialist Revolution openly came out against the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state.—32, 35, 46, 47, 53, 54, 56, 57, 60, 239, 242, 245, 257, 262, 270, 275, 286, 293, 314-15, 316,

317, 318, 319, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325

*Kerensky, Alexander Fyodorovich* (1881-1970)—a Socialist-Revolutionary. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Minister of Justice, Minister of the Army and Navy, then Prime Minister of the bourgeois Provisional Government and Supreme Commander-in-Chief. Following the October Socialist Revolution fought against the Soviet government.—21, 24, 25, 38, 41, 64-65, 71, 118, 135, 142, 143, 152, 159, 161, 163, 164, 168, 175, 179, 192, 194, 195, 199, 205, 206, 207, 208, 212, 217, 222, 223, 224, 235, 236, 237, 246, 291, 328, 329, 332, 339, 340, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 359, 360, 364, 376, 377, 378, 380, 384, 389, 390, 392, 396, 397, 398, 399, 402, 412, 416, 419, 433, 437, 438, 446, 456, 479, 497, 498, 500, 514, 516, 527, 530, 533, 534, 537, 570, 572, 575, 577, 579, 581, 589, 590, 591, 593, 601, 605, 612, 634, 640, 641, 653, 655, 667, 668, 670, 676, 696, 701, 709

*Kishkin, Nikolai Mikhailovich* (1864-1930)—a leader of the Cadet Party, Minister in the bourgeois Provisional Government. On the eve of the October Socialist Revolution was appointed "dictator" of Petrograd.—340, 348, 354, 361, 379, 589

*Klembovsky, Vladimir Napoleono-*  
*vich* (1860-1921)—general of the tsarist army; Commander-in-Chief on the Northern Front from May 1917. Took an active part in the Kornilov revolt.—179, 223

*Kolb, Wilhelm* (1870-1918)—German Social Democrat, opportunist and revisionist. During the First World War took a social-chauvinist stand.—326

*Konovalov, Alexander Ivanovich* (b. 1875)—Russian big textile manufacturer. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Minister of Trade and Industry and subsequently Deputy Prime Minister in the bourgeois

Provisional Government.—354

*Kornilov, Laur Georgievich* (1870-1918)—tsarist general, monarchist; Supreme Commander-in-Chief in July and August 1917. Headed the counter-revolutionary revolt in August 1917. After the suppression of the revolt was arrested but escaped and fled to the Don, where he became one of the organisers, and then commander of the white-guard Volunteer Army.—167, 168, 169, 170, 174, 176, 178, 179, 192, 212, 222, 223, 229, 230, 234, 340, 384, 398, 434, 446, 497, 514, 533, 537, 599, 601, 605, 607, 609, 612, 614, 654

*Kostrov*—see *Jordania, Noi Nikolayevich*.

*Krasnov, Pyotr Nikolayevich* (1869-1947)—tsarist general; one of the leaders of the Kornilov revolt in August 1917. At the end of October 1917 commanded the Cossacks' detachments despatched by Kerensky against Petrograd during the anti-Soviet revolt. In 1918-19 headed the white Cossack army on the Don.—527, 593, 668, 669, 675

*Kropotkin, Pyotr Alexeyevich* (1842-1921)—a prominent leader and theoretician of anarchism. From 1876 to 1917 lived in emigration abroad. During the First World War adopted a chauvinist stand but in 1920 addressed a letter to the European workers in which he recognised the historical significance of the October Socialist Revolution and called on them to prevent an armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—310, 324

*Krylenko, Nikolai Vasilyevich* (1885-1938)—Bolshevik from 1904; a prominent Soviet statesman. Active participant in the October Socialist Revolution. At the Second Congress of Soviets entered the Council of People's Commissars as member of the Committee for Military and Naval Affairs, later Supreme Commander-in-Chief. From 1918 worked in the organs of the Commissariat for Justice.—430, 483, 491, 545

*Kuchuk Khan* (d. 1921)—Iranian politician; expressed the interests of the commercial bourgeoisie and a section of the landowners.—689

*Kugelmann, Ludwig* (1830-1902)—German Social Democrat; participant in the 1848-49 revolution in Germany; member of the First International. Between 1862 and 1874 he corresponded with Karl Marx, who lived in London, informing him of the state of affairs in Germany.—264

*Kuskova, Yekaterina Dmitrievna* (1869-1958)—Russian bourgeois journalist and public figure, prominent theoretician of Economism in the Social-Democratic movement, author of the Economists' "Credo", which vividly demonstrated the opportunist essence of Economism. Subsequently took the position of the Cadet Party—354

## L

*Lassalle, Ferdinand* (1825-1864)—German petty-bourgeois socialist, father of Lassalleanism, one of the varieties of opportunism in the German working-class movement. His service to the movement was the foundation of the General Association of German Workers, which, however, he led along the path of opportunism—296, 298, 299, 304, 305

*Lazzari, Constantino* (1857-1927)—prominent figure in the working-class movement in Italy, one of the founders of the Italian Socialist Party. During the First World War led its Centre. After the October Socialist Revolution supported Soviet Russia; attended the Second and Third Congresses of the Communist International—55, 682

*Ledebour, Georg* (1850-1947)—German Social-Democrat, Centrist.—53, 54

*Legien, Karl* (1861-1920)—German Right-wing Social Democrat, one of the leaders of the German trade union movement. During the First World War adopted an extreme

social-chauvinist stand.—54, 238, 270, 272, 326

*Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich (Ulyanov, V.; Lennin, N.)* (1870-1924)—13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 32, 133, 134, 135, 146, 378, 401, 403, 404, 405, 410, 430, 433, 434, 436, 437, 438, 440, 442, 448, 449, 452, 453, 489, 490, 492, 544, 637, 668, 684, 685

*Lensch, Paul* (1873-1926)—German Social-Democrat; social-chauvinist during the First World War.—211

*Lieber (Goldmann), Mikhail Isaakovich* (1880-1937)—a leader of the Bund. During the First World War of 1914-18 adopted a social-chauvinist stand. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and of the Presidium of the first Central Executive Committee. Took a Menshevik position, came out in favour of a coalition government—363

*Liebknrecht, Karl* (1871-1919)—outstanding figure in the German and international working-class movement, one of the leaders of Left-wing German Social-Democracy. During the First World War took a revolutionary internationalist stand. One of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany and leader of the uprising among the Berlin workers in January 1919. After the suppression of the uprising was brutally murdered by counter-revolutionaries.—54, 59, 75, 77, 123, 286, 287, 242, 395, 512, 513, 517, 533, 578

*Linde, F. F.* (1881-1917)—member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, participant in the soldiers' demonstrations in April 1917. Later was appointed commissar of the bourgeois Provisional Government at the South-Western Front; was killed while urging the soldiers to launch an attack.—228

*Lindhagen, Carl* (1860-1946)—Swedish politician, first a Liberal

and from 1909 a Social-Democrat. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand. In 1917 took part in organising the Left Social-Democratic Party of Sweden, which in 1919 joined the Communist International.—55

*Lomov A. (Oppokov, Georgi Ippolitovich)* (1888-1938)—member of the Bolshevik Party from 1903, professional revolutionary and Soviet statesman. At the Second Congress of Soviets entered the Council of People's Commissars as People's Commissar of Justice. In 1918 was one of the "Left Communists".—545

*Longuet, Jean* (1876-1938)—a leader of the French Socialist Party and the Second International. During the First World War headed the pacifist Centrist minority of the F.S.P. Came out against the F.S.P. joining the Communist International and against the setting up of the Communist Party of France. From 1921 member of the Executive Committee of the Two-and-a-Half International.—32, 53

*Loriot, Ferdinand* (1870-1930)—French socialist. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand; at the Kienthal Socialist Conference joined the Zimmerwald Left group.—55

*Lubersac, Jean de*—officer of the French army, monarchist; member of the French military mission to Russia in 1917-18.—708

*Lunacharsky, Anatoly Vasilyevich* (1875-1933)—professional revolutionary, prominent Soviet statesman and man of letters. After the October Socialist Revolution People's Commissar for Education (1917-29); wrote a number of books on art and literature.—430

*Luxemburg, Rosa* (1871-1919)—outstanding figure of the German, Polish and international labour movement, one of the leaders of the Left wing in the Second International. In 1918 took

part in founding the Communist Party of Germany. In January 1919 was brutally murdered by the counter-revolutionaries.—33, 54, 107, 320

*Lvov, Georgi Yeugenyevich, Prince* (1861-1925)—big Russian landowner, member of the Constitutional-Democratic Party and Zemstvo functionary. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Prime Minister and Minister for the Interior in the bourgeois Provisional Government (March-July 1917). One of the initiators of the brutal reprisals against the Petrograd workers and soldiers after the mass demonstrations in Petrograd on July 3 and 4 (16 and 17), 1917.—21, 24, 26, 27, 29, 37, 40, 47, 71, 130

*Lyakhov, Vladimir Platonovich* (1869-1919)—tsarist colonel; organised the brutal suppression of the national-revolutionary movement in the Caucasus and Iran.—121

## M

*M—n, U.*—See *Milyutin, U. P.*

*MacDonald, James Ramsay* (1866-1937)—British politician, one of the founders and leaders of the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party; pursued an extremely opportunist policy and preached the theory of class collaboration and the gradual development of capitalism into socialism. On the outbreak of the First World War adopted a pacifist position but subsequently openly supported the imperialist bourgeoisie. In 1918-20 made attempts to prevent the British workers from resisting the anti-Soviet armed intervention.—32, 53, 123

*Maclean, John* (1879-1923)—prominent leader of the British labour movement, member of the Left wing of the British Socialist Party. During the First World War took an internationalist stand and carried on revolutionary anti-war

- propaganda among the masses.—55, 123, 342
- MacMahon, Marie Edmé Patrice Maurice, de* (1808-1893)—Marshal of France and statesman, monarchist; in 1871 as commander of the Versailles counter-revolutionary army, suppressed the Paris Commune with great brutality.—174
- Maklakov, Uasily Alexeyevich* (1870-1959)—Russian landowner, member of the Right wing of the Cadet party; as a lawyer led many political lawsuits. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was the ambassador of the bourgeois Provisional Government in Paris.—121, 231
- Martov, L. (Tsederbaum, Yuli Osipovich)* (1873-1923)—Menshevik leader. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Following the October Socialist Revolution came out against the Soviet government.—53, 58, 175, 362, 438, 446, 605, 606, 607, 616
- Marx, Karl* (1818-1883)—15, 33, 47, 59, 60, 61, 62, 66, 81, 90, 96, 119, 239, 240, 241, 242, 247, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 268, 269, 270, 272, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 280, 284, 285, 289, 292, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 304, 305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 329, 331, 334, 361, 375, 386, 387, 393, 394, 473, 506, 560, 606, 608, 637-38, 639
- Maslov, Pyotr Pavlovich* (1867-1946)—Russian Social-Democrat, economist; wrote a number of works on the agrarian question in which he tried to revise the fundamental principles of Marxist political economy.—98
- Mehring Franz* (1846-1919)—prominent figure in the German labour movement, a leader and theoretician of the Left wing of German Social-Democracy. Played a prominent part in founding the Communist Party of Germany.—682
- Merrheim, Alphonse* (1881-1925)—French trade-unionist and syndicalist, one of the leaders of the French General Confederation of Labour. After the outbreak of the First World War was an internationalist but later adopted a Centrist pacifist stand. Took a hostile attitude to Soviet Russia.—55, 57
- Mikhailovsky, Nikolai Konstantinovich* (1842-1904)—prominent theoretician of liberal Narodism, positivist philosopher, publicist.—243
- Millerand, Alexandre Etienne* (1859-1943)—French politician and statesman. In the 1890s joined the socialists and headed the opportunist trend in the French socialist movement. In 1899 entered the reactionary bourgeois government of Waldeck-Rousseau. After his expulsion from the Socialist Party in 1904, founded, together with other former socialists (Briand, Viviani, etc.), the group of Independent Socialists. Held various portfolios in the French government; was President of France from 1920 to 1924.—315
- Milyukov, Pavel Nikolayevich* (1859-1943)—one of the founders and leaders of the Cadet Party. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Foreign Minister in the first cabinet of the bourgeois Provisional Government; pursued a policy of continuing the imperialist war to "a victorious conclusion".—19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 27, 43, 58, 71, 74, 81, 85, 93, 103, 108, 121, 125, 140, 169, 192, 212, 230, 231, 233, 236, 339, 670, 698
- Milyutin, Uladimir Pavlovich (M—n, U.)* (1884-1938)—Russian Social-Democrat, first adhered to the Mensheviks and from 1910 was a Bolshevik. After the Second Congress of Soviets entered the Council of People's Commissars as



People's Commissar of Agriculture. In November 1917 came out in favour of a coalition government, with the participation of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and, declaring his disagreement with the Party's policy, withdrew from the Central Committee and from the Soviet government. From 1918 to 1921 was Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council; later held other responsible government and administrative posts.—170, 404, 430, 444

*Mirbach, Wilhelm* (1871-1918)—German diplomat. From April 1918 was German Ambassador in Moscow. On July 6, 1918 was assassinated by Left Socialist-Revolutionaries with the object of provoking a war between Germany and Soviet Russia.—667

*Modigliani, Vittorio Emmanuele* (1872-1947)—a veteran of the Italian Socialist Party, reformist. During the First World War of 1914-18 adopted a Centrist stand; took part in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal Socialist Conferences, opposed the Zimmerwald Left group.—53

*Montesquieu, Charles* (1689-1755)—outstanding French bourgeois sociologist, economist and writer representing the bourgeois Enlightenment of the 18th century, ideologist of constitutional monarchy. 277

*Muller, Gustav* (1860-1921)—Swiss Right Social-Democrat, officer. During the First World War of 1914-18 adopted a social-chauvinist stand and opposed the Zimmerwald movement.—57

*Munzenberg, Wilhelm* (1889-1940)—a leader in the labour movement in Switzerland and Germany. During the First World War of 1914-18 took an internationalist stand; was a leader of the Social-Democratic youth organisation in Switzerland, Secretary of the Socialist Youth International and

editor of its organ *Jugend Internationale*.—57

## N

*Napoleon I (Bonaparte)* (1769-1821)—Emperor of the French (1804-14 and 1815).—108, 215, 257, 294, 524, 541, 567, 576, 580, 581, 582, 583, 633

*Napoleon III (Louis Napoleon)* (1808-1873)—Emperor of the French (1852-70), nephew of Napoleon I.—256, 257

*Nekrasov, Nikolai Vissarionovich* (b. 1879)—Cadet. In 1917 was Minister of Railways, Minister without a portfolio, and Minister of Finance in the bourgeois Provisional Government.—192

*Nerman, Ture* (b. 1886)—Swedish Left Social-Democrat, poet and writer. During the First World War of 1914-18 took an internationalist stand, adhered to the Zimmerwald Left group.—55

*Nicholas I (Romanov)* (1796-1855)—Russian Emperor (1825-1855).—42

*Nicholas II (Romanov)* (1868-1918)—the last Russian Emperor (1894-1917)—23, 37, 42, 71, 72, 83, 88, 92, 94, 108, 156, 158, 163, 516, 535, 572, 578, 653, 655

*Nikitin, A. M.* (b. 1876)—Menshevik. After the July events in 1917, Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, and Minister of the Interior in the last cabinet of the bourgeois Provisional Government.—345, 347, 364, 379

*Nogin, Viktor Pavlovich* (1878-1924)—professional revolutionary, Bolshevik. After the October Socialist Revolution entered the Council of People's Commissars as People's Commissar of Trade and Industry. In November 1917 advocated setting up a coalition government with Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries participating, and, declaring his disagreement with the policy of the Party, withdrew from the Central Com-

mittee and the government; later admitted his mistakes and held responsible government and administrative posts.—430, 444

## O

*Oppokov*—see *Lomov, A.*

*Osinsky, N. (Obolensky, Valerian Valerianovich)* (1887-1938)—Bolshevik from 1907. After the October Socialist Revolution was Manager of the State Bank of the R.S.F.S.R. and afterwards Chairman of the Supreme Economic Council. In 1918 was among the "Left Communists", being the main author of their platform.—643

*Ouseyenko*—see *Antonov-Ouseyenko, V. A.*

## P

*Palchinsky, Pyotr Ioakimovich* (d. 1930)—engineer, organiser of the Prodigol Syndicate; was closely connected with banking circles. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry in the bourgeois Provisional Government, inspired sabotage by industrialists and fought against democratic organisations.—162, 204, 205, 222, 246

*Panina, S. U., Countess*—member of the Central Committee of the Cadet Party. In 1917 was Deputy Minister for Public Care and subsequently Deputy Minister for Public Education in the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution emigrated.—157

*Pannekoek, Anton* (1873-1960)—Dutch Social Democrat. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand. In 1918-21 was a member of the Communist Party of the Netherlands and took an active part in the work of the Communist International; held

ultra-Left, sectarian views. In 1921 left the Communist Party and shortly afterwards retired from active political life.—55, 320, 321, 322, 323

*Parvus (Gelfand, Alexander Lazarevitch)* (1869-1924)—at the end of the 1890s and the early 1900s was a member of the German Social-Democratic Party adhering to its Left wing. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903 a Menshevik; contributed to Menshevik publications. Later abandoned Social-Democracy. During the First World War took a chauvinist stand and was actually an agent of the imperialists.—57

*Pereverzev, Pavel Nikolayevich*—lawyer. Trudovik close to Socialist Revolutionaries. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Minister of Justice in the first coalition bourgeois Provisional Government. In July 1917 published false documents, compromising Lenin and the Bolsheviks, which were fabricated by Alexinsky jointly with the counter intelligence service—141, 147, 387

*Peshkhonov, Alexei Vasilyevich* (1867-1933)—bourgeois journalist and public figure, a leader of the petty-bourgeois party of Popular Socialists from 1906. In 1917 was Minister of Food in the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution opposed Soviet power.—162, 180, 204, 205, 222, 223, 224, 237, 366, 383, 384

*Peter I* (1672-1725)—Russian tsar (1682-1721), first Emperor of Russia (1721-25).—635

*Petlyura, Simon Vasilyevich* (1877-1926)—a leader of the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists; secretary-general for army affairs in the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian Central Rada (1917). During the foreign armed intervention and the Civil War was one of the leaders of the counter-revolution in the Ukraine—544

*Pflüger, Paul Berngard* (b. 1865)—Swiss Right Social-Democrat, a social-chauvinist during the First World War.—57

*Platten, Fritz* (1883-1942)—Swiss Left Social Democrat and subsequently a Communist. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand; took part in the socialist Conferences in Zimmerwald and Kienthal adhering to the Zimmerwald Left. In April 1917 organised Lenin's return to Russia from Switzerland.—58

*Plekhanov, Georgi Valentinovich* (1856-1918)—an outstanding leader of the Russian and international working-class movement, first propagandist of Marxism in Russia. After the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in 1903 Plekhanov adopted a conciliatory stand towards the opportunists, and afterwards joined the Mensheviks. During the First World War took a social-chauvinist position. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution headed *Yedinstvo*, the extreme Right group of Menshevik defencists, and opposed the Bolsheviks who were preparing for the socialist revolution, considering that Russia was not ripe for socialism. He disapproved of the October Socialist Revolution, but took no part in the struggle against Soviet power.—21, 26, 28, 32, 33, 35, 46, 47, 51, 52, 54, 57, 60, 75, 77, 91, 106, 139, 190, 211, 212, 220, 223, 226, 232, 233, 236, 238, 263, 270, 310, 314, 326, 339, 360, 382, 383, 384, 720

*Podvoisky, Nikolai Ilyich* (1880-1948)—prominent leader of the revolutionary movement in Russia, member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1901. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Petrograd Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and leader of the Military Organisation of the Party's Central Committee. Was one of the leaders in the preparations for the October 1917 armed uprising and, during the uprising itself, in storming the

Winter Palace. After the October Socialist Revolution held responsible military, government and Party posts.—545

*Pokrovsky, Mikhail Nikolayevich* (1868-1932)—Bolshevik since 1905, Soviet statesman and public figure, historian. From November 1917 to March 1918 was Chairman of the Moscow Soviet. For some time adhered to the "Left Communists" opposing the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty. From 1918 was Deputy People's Commissar of Education of the R.S.F.S.R.—641

*Poloutsev, P. A.* (b. 1874)—tsarist general; during the July days of 1917 directed the suppression and shooting of the peaceful demonstration in Petrograd and the raid on the premises of the *Pravda* Editorial Board.—135

*Pomyalovsky, Nikolai Gerasimovich* (1835-1863)—Russian democratic writer.—309, 646

*Potresov, Alexander Nikolayevich* (1869-1934)—a Menshevik leader. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. In 1917 was editor of the newspaper *Dyen* (Day) which conducted a vicious slander campaign against the Bolsheviks.—21, 25, 28, 51, 54, 59, 191, 223, 226, 232, 233, 236, 238, 326

*Pressmanne, Adrien* (1879-1929)—French socialist, Centrist during the First World War.—53

*Prilezhayev, I. A.*—Socialist Revolutionary, contributor to the S. R. newspaper *Dyelo Naroda* (People's Cause), member of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party from December 1917.—224

*Prokopovich, Sergei Nikolayevich* (1871-1955)—bourgeois economist and publicist. In 1917 was Minister of Food in the bourgeois Provisional Government. After the October Socialist Revolution fought against Soviet power.—192, 364

*Proudhon, Pierre Joseph* (1809-1865)—French economist and sociolo-

gist, ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie; one of the founders of anarchism.—275, 284, 296, 314, 315

*Purishkevich, Uladimir Mitrofanovich* (1870-1920)—big landowner, rabid reactionary, monarchist, notorious for his anti-semitic pogromist speeches in the Duma. After the October Socialist Revolution fought against Soviet power.—446

*Pyatakov (Kievsky), Georgi Leonidovich* (1890-1937)—Russian Social-Democrat, Bolshevik. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Chairman of the Kiev Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and member of the Executive Committee of the Kiev Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Following the October Socialist Revolution was a member of the Soviet Government of the Ukraine and from 1920 held government and administrative posts. Repeatedly opposed the Party's Leninist policy, for which was expelled from its ranks.—107, 109

## R

*Radek, Karl Berngardovich* (1885-1939)—participant in the Social-Democratic movement in Galicia, Poland and Germany, Bolshevik from 1917. During the First World War (1914-18) took an internationalist stand; adhered to the "Left Communists" in the period of the Brest Peace Treaty. From 1923 an active member of the Trotskyist opposition. Expelled from the Party for anti-Party activities.—55, 57, 320, 546, 549

*Rakitnikov, N. I.* (b. 1864)—member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Central Committee, journalist. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Deputy Minister of Agriculture.—151

*Rasputin (Novykh), Grigory Yefimovich* (1872-1916)—adventurist enjoying great influence at the court of Nicholas II.—20, 535

*Renaudel, Pierre* (1871-1935)—a reformist leader of the French Socialist Party; a social-chauvinist

during the First World War.—52, 238, 270, 715

*Renner, Karl* (1870-1950)—Austrian politician, leader and theoretician of the Austrian Right Social-Democrats; one of the authors of the bourgeois-nationalistic theory of "national-cultural autonomy". During the First World War took a social-chauvinist stand.—714

*Rodichev, Fyodor Izmailovich* (b. 1856)—one of the Cadet Party leaders, member of its Central Committee. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was the Provisional Government's Commissar for Finland.—107, 108

*Rodzyanko, Mikhail Ulaamirovich* (1859-1924)—big landowner, one of the Octobrist Party leaders, monarchist. During the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution organised a counter-revolutionary centre known as the Provisional Committee of the Duma, and then a Private Council of Duma members, was one of the leaders of the Kornilov revolt.—169, 412

*Roland-Holst, Henriette* (1869-1952)—Dutch Left socialist, writer. Worked to organise women's unions, adhered to the Left-wing Social-Democrats. On the outbreak of the First World War adopted a Centrist stand but then joined the internationalists. Took part in publishing the journal *Vorbote*, the theoretical organ of the Zimmerwald Left.—55

*Rolovich (Rokhovich), G. Y.*—member of the Central State Food Committee in 1917.—206

*Romanov, Mikhail Alexandrovich* (1878-1918)—Grand Duke, brother of Tsar Nicholas II.—26

*Romanov, Nicholas I*—see *Nicholas I*  
*Romanov, Nicholas II*—see *Nicholas II*

*Romanovs*—dynasty of Russian tsars and emperors, ruled the country from 1613 to 1917.—20, 25, 37

*Rubanovich, Ilya Adolfovich* (1860-1920)—one of the leaders of the

**Socialist-Revolutionary Party**, member of the International Socialist Bureau. During the First World War was a social-chauvinist.—238

*Ruhle, Otto* (b. 1874)—German Left Social-Democrat, publicist and pedagogue. During the First World War took an internationalist stand; as a member of the Reichstag voted against war credits.—54

*Rusanov, Nikolai Sergeyevich* (b. 1859)—Socialist-Revolutionary, publicist; edited a number of S. R. newspapers.—271

*Ryabushinsky, Pavel Pavlovich* (b. 1871)—big Moscow capitalist and banker, one of the counter-revolutionary leaders. In August 1917 threatened to strangle the revolution by the "gaunt hand of famine"; was one of the inspirers and organisers of the Kornilov revolt.—186, 230, 231, 233, 497, 498

*Ryazanov (Goldendach), David Borisovich* (1870-1938)—joined the Social-Democratic movement in the 1890s, Menshevik. During the First World War took a Centrist stand; contributed to Menshevik newspapers. At the Sixth Party Congress in 1917 was admitted to membership of the R.S.D.L.P.(B). After the October Socialist Revolution worked in the trade unions. Subsequently was expelled from the R.C.P.(B.) for supporting the counter-revolutionary activities of the Mensheviks.—544

*Rykov, Alexei Ivanovich* (1881-1938)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1899, Bolshevik. After the October Socialist Revolution held a number of key posts; was a member of the C.C. Political Bureau. In November 1917 advocated a coalition government with participation of Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, and declaring his disagreement with the policy of the Party, withdrew from the Party Central Committee and the government. Expelled from the Party in 1937 for anti-Party activities.—430, 444

## S

*Sadoul, Jacques* (1881-1956)—French officer, member of the French Socialist Party. In 1917 was sent to Russia as a member of the French military mission. Under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution became a Communist and joined the Red Army. Opposed the Entente's military intervention against Soviet Russia.—708

*Savinkov, Boris Vuktorovich* (1879-1925)—a leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Deputy War Minister in the bourgeois Provisional Government and then Governor-General of Pétograd. Following the October Socialist Revolution was one of the organisers of the counter-revolutionary struggle against the Soviet state—433, 609, 670

*Scheidemann, Philipp* (1865-1939)—a leader of the extreme Right, Opportunist wing of German Social-Democracy. During the November 1918 revolution in Germany was a member of the "Council of People's Representatives" which actually defended the interests of the bourgeoisie; took part in the ruthless suppression of the working-class movement in Germany in 1918-21.—21, 52, 54, 57, 211, 232, 272, 325, 616, 715

*Schottmann, Alexander Vasilyevich* (1880-1939)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1899. From June 1917 was member of the Petrograd District Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.(B); in August that year, when Lenin was hiding from the persecution of the Provisional Government in Razliv, organised on the Party's decision Lenin's passage from Razliv to Finland. Took an active part in the October Socialist Revolution. After the Revolution held responsible government, Party and administrative posts.—404

*Sembat, Marcel* (1862-1922)—a reformist leader of the French Socialist Party. During the First

- World War—a social-chauvinist; Minister of Public Works in the imperialist French Government of National Defence.—52, 270, 272
- Semyonov, G. M.* (1890-1946)—ataman of the Trans-Baikal Cossack Army, enemy of Soviet power and agent of Japanese imperialism. From 1918 waged an armed struggle against the Soviet government in the Far East; organised counter-revolutionary governments in the Trans-Baikal and Amur areas.—647
- Sereda, Semyon Pafnut'yevich* (1871-1933)—Bolshevik from 1903, Soviet statesman. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was member of the Executive Committee of the Ryazan Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. Following the October Socialist Revolution held responsible government and administrative posts.—682
- Serrati, Giacinto Menotti* (1872-1926)—prominent figure in the working-class movement in Italy, a leader of the Italian Socialist Party. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand; took part in the Zimmerwald and Kienthal socialist conferences. At the Second Congress of the Comintern, where he headed the Italian delegation, opposed a resolute break with the reformists. Joined the Communist Party of Italy in 1924.—55
- Shahumyan, Stepan Georgievich* (1878-1918)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1900. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Chairman of the Baku Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Following the October Socialist Revolution was Provisional Commissar Extraordinary for Caucasian Affairs and Chairman of the Baku Council of People's Commissars. After the fall of the Baku Commune in August 1918, was arrested and shot together with the other 25 Baku Commissars by the British interventionists, with the help of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries.—689
- Shingaryov, Andrei Ivanovich* (1869-1918)—Cadet and Zemstvo leader. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Minister of Agriculture in the first cabinet, and Minister of Finance in the second cabinet of the bourgeois Provisional Government.—21, 100, 101, 103, 192
- Shlyapnikov, Alexander Gavrilovich* (1885-1937)—member of the R.S.D.L.P. from 1901. After the October Socialist Revolution was People's Commissar of Labour in the Council of People's Commissars, afterwards held trade union and administrative posts. In 1920-22 organised and led the anti-Party Workers' Opposition group. In 1933 was expelled from the R.C.P.(B.) during the Party purge.—430
- Skobel'ev, Matvei Ivanovich* (1885-1939)—Russian Social-Democrat, Menshevik. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Vice-Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and Vice-Chairman of the first Central Executive Committee; was a member of the bourgeois Provisional Government.—52, 162, 163, 194, 205, 246, 271
- Skoropadsky, Pavel Petrovich* (1873-1945)—tsarist general, Octobrist. From April to December 1918 was placed at the head of the bourgeois government of the Ukraine by the German imperialists.—678
- Skoropis-Yoltukhovskiy, A. F.* (b. 1880)—Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist, one of the organisers and leaders of the bourgeois-nationalist Emancipation of the Ukraine Union during the First World War.—133
- Skvortsov-Stepanov, Ivan Ivanovich* (1870-1928)—veteran of the revolutionary movement in Russia, a prominent member of the Communist Party and Soviet statesman, man of letters. During the October Socialist Revolution was a member of the Moscow Military Revolutionary Committee; subse-

- quently the first People's Commissar of Finance in Soviet Russia.—430
- Smirnov, U. M.* (1887-1937)—Bolshevik from 1907. After the October Socialist Revolution was a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Economic Council. In 1918 a "Left Communist". Subsequently was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—554
- Smith-Falkner, Maria Natanovna* (*Smith, M.*) (1878-1968)—economist and statistician. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution contributed to the semi-Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*. In July 1918 joined the Bolshevik Party.—206
- Snowden, Philip* (1864-1937)—British politician, Chairman of the Independent Labour Party, representing its Right wing (1903-06 and 1917-20). During the First World War adopted a Centrist position.—53
- Sokolnikov, Grigory Yakovlevich* (*Brilliant, G. Y.*) (1888-1939)—Bolshevik from 1905. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was member of the Moscow Party Committee, the Moscow Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) and the Editorial Board of *Pravda*. Following the October Socialist Revolution held Party and government posts. Subsequently was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—414, 554
- Sorokin, Pitirim Alexandrovich* (1859-1968)—bourgeois sociologist, member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. Before 1917 was a Privat-Docent in Petrograd University; between 1919 and 1922 taught sociology at higher educational establishments in Petrograd. In 1922 banished from Russia for his counter-revolutionary activities.—718, 719, 720, 722
- Spencer, Herbert* (1820-1903)—prominent English positivist philosopher, psychologist and sociologist.—243
- Spiridonova, Maria Alexandrovna* (1884-1941)—one of the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution took part in organising the Left wing of the S.R. Party. When the Party of Left Socialist-Revolutionaries was formed in November 1917, became a member of its Central Committee.—138, 175, 670, 681, 695, 698
- Spiro, U. B.*—one of the leaders of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary Party, delegate to the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Later worked in the Ukraine. In the spring of 1918 was Commissar Extraordinary on the Rumanian front.—443
- Stalin, Joseph Vissarionovich* (*Jugashvili*) (1879-1953)—133, 414, 430, 492, 689
- Stauning, Thorwald* (1873-1942)—Danish statesman and publicist, Right-wing leader of the Social-Democratic Party of Denmark and the Second International. During the First World War adopted a social-chauvinist stand. Minister without portfolio in the bourgeois government of Denmark (1916-20).—52, 55, 270, 326
- Steinberg, Isaak Zakharovich*—lawyer, one of the Left Socialist-Revolutionary leaders. After the October Socialist Revolution was People's Commissar of Justice in the Council of People's Commissars; opposed the conclusion of the Brest Peace Treaty.—515
- Steklov, Yury Mikhailovich* (1873-1941)—joined the Social-Democratic movement in 1893, professional revolutionary. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution took the position of "revolutionary defensism"; later sided with the Bolsheviks.—30, 35, 43, 52
- Stirner, Max* (1806-1856)—German philosopher, an ideologist of bourgeois individualism and anarchism.—313

*Stolypin, Pyotr Arkadyevich* (1862-1911)—statesman of tsarist Russia. In 1906-11 Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior. Associated with his name is the period of harsh political reaction characterised by wide use of capital punishment to suppress the revolutionary movement (1907-10).—24, 37, 338, 345, 347, 379, 513, 537

*Ström, Fredrik* (1880-1948)—Swedish Left Social-Democrat, writer and publicist. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand.—55

*Struve, Pyotr Berggardovich* (1870-1944)—Russian bourgeois economist and publicist, a leader of the Cadet Party. In the 1890s a leading spokesman of "legal Marxism", the Russian variety of Bernsteinianism. An ideologist of Russian imperialism. After the October Socialist Revolution a rabid enemy of Soviet power.—265, 364

*Sverdlov, Yakov Mikhailovich* (1885-1919)—prominent Soviet statesman. Joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1901; took an active part in preparing and carrying out the October Socialist Revolution. On November 8 (21), 1917 was elected Chairman of the Central Executive Committee.—414

## T

*Taylor, Frederick Winslow* (1856-1915)—American engineer, founder of the system of labour organisation aimed at maximum utilisation of the working day and rational use of the materials and instruments of labour.—602, 603, 622, 641

*Teodorovich, Ivan Adolfovich* (1875-1940)—Russian Social-Democrat, Bolshevik; worked in Bolshevik organisations in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Smolensk and Siberia.—42, 430

*Tereshchenko, Mikhail Ivanovich* (b. 1888)—big Russian sugar man-

ufacturer, millionaire. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was Minister of Finance and then Minister of Foreign Affairs in the bourgeois Provisional Government; pursued a policy of continuing the war "to a victorious conclusion".—121, 124, 186, 192, 193, 199, 207

*Trèves, Claudio* (1868-1933)—a reformist leader of the Italian Socialist Party; during the First World War a Centrist.—53, 326

*Trier, Gerson* (b. 1851)—Danish Left Social-Democrat. During the First World War took an internationalist stand. In September 1916 came out against the Danish Social-Democratic Party's decision to allow its members to join the bourgeois government and in protest against it withdrew from the Party.—55

*Troelstra, Pieter Jelles* (1860-1930)—a leader of the Dutch labour movement, opportunist. One of the founders (1894) and leaders of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party of Holland; opposed its Left wing formed around the newspaper *De Tribune*. During the First World War was a pro-German social-chauvinist.—52

*Trotsky (Bronstein), Lev Davidovich* (1879-1940)—Russian Social-Democrat, Menshevik, a rabid enemy of Leninism. After the defeat of the 1905-07 Revolution became a liquidator; opposed Lenin and the Bolsheviks on the questions of war and peace and the revolution. During the First World War took a Centrist position. In 1917 was admitted to membership of the Bolshevik Party, but did not accept Bolshevism and waged a hidden and open struggle against Leninism and the Party's policy.

After the October Socialist Revolution held responsible posts but constantly opposed the Party's general line and its programme of building socialism in the USSR. In 1927 was expelled from the Party, in 1929 exiled from Russia



for his anti-Soviet activities, and deprived of Soviet citizenship in 1932.—16, 58, 340, 378, 410, 488, 491, 547, 549, 668

*Tsereteli, Irakly Georgievich* (1882-1959)—a Menshevik leader. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet and the first Central Executive Committee of the Soviets. In May 1917 entered the bourgeois Provisional Government as Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, and after the July events became Minister of the Interior. Was one of the inspirers of the campaign of slander and persecution of the Bolsheviks. Following the October Socialist Revolution was one of the leaders of the counter-revolutionary Menshevik government of Georgia.—29, 30, 35, 36, 41, 52, 53, 59, 64, 65, 69, 86, 93, 131, 133, 135, 144, 151, 152, 162, 163, 186, 205, 212, 222, 236, 238, 246, 271, 292, 296, 309, 326, 332, 337, 339, 346, 352, 357, 363, 364, 371, 378, 379, 382, 388, 501, 575, 579, 589, 607, 641, 642

*Tugan-Baranovsky, Mikhail Ivanovich* (1865-1919)—Russian bourgeois economist, prominent "legal Marxist", subsequently a Cadet. After the October Socialist Revolution a counter-revolutionary leader in the Ukraine.—306

*Turati, Filippo* (1857-1932)—leader of the Italian labour movement, one of the organisers of the Italian Socialist Party and leader of its Right, reformist wing. During the First World War adopted a Centrist stand.—32, 53, 57, 326

*Turgenev, Ivan Sergeyevich* (1818-1883)—Russian writer.—616

*Tyszka, Jan* (1867-1919)—prominent leader of the Polish and German labour movement. One of the founders of the Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania and member of

the Party's Executive. During the First World War adopted an internationalist stand; participated in the work of the German Social-Democrats. One of the organisers of the Spartacus League and subsequently of the Communist Party of Germany.—55

## U

*Umansky, A. M.*—journalist, editor and publisher of the Black-Hundred newspaper *Zhivoye Slovo*, which was the first in Petrograd to publish the slanderous report of Alexinsky and Pankratov directed against Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the July days of 1917.—133

*Uritsky, Moisei Solomonovich* (1873-1918)—active participant in the revolutionary movement in Russia, a "Left Communist" during the negotiation of the Brest Peace Treaty. At the 7th Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) was elected alternate member of the Party Central Committee. In 1918 was appointed Chairman of the Petrograd Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage.—546

## V

*Vandervelde, Emile* (1866-1938)—one of the opportunist leaders of the Belgian Workers' Party, Chairman of the International Socialist Bureau of the Second International. During the First World War (1914-18) adopted a social-chauvinist stand; was a member of the bourgeois government of Belgium. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution came to Russia to agitate for the continuation of the imperialist war.—56, 238, 270, 272, 326

*Vinnichenko, Vladimir Kirillovich* (1880-1951)—Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist. After the February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was one of the organisers and

leaders of the Ukrainian Central Rada. In 1918-19 headed the bourgeois nationalist government of the Ukraine.—575

*Uol-y*—see *Uolodarsky U.*

*Uolodarsky U. (Goldstein Moisei Markovich)* (1891-1918)—Bolshevik from 1917. After February 1917 bourgeois-democratic revolution was a member of the Petrograd Party Committee and of the Presidium of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and a member of the first Central Executive Committee. Following the October Socialist Revolution was Commissar for the Press, Agitation and Propaganda.—168, 170

## W

*Webb, Beatrice* (1858-1943) and *Sidney* (1859-1947)—English public figures, founders of the Fabian Society, authors of books on the history and theory of the English labour movement. During the First World War (1914-18) took a social-chauvinist stand.—323

*Weydemeyer, Joseph* (1818-1866)—prominent figure in the German and American labour movement, member of the Communist League, friend and comrade-in-arms of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Took part in the 1848-49 revolution in Germany.—261

*Wijnkoop, David* (1877-1941)—Dutch Left Social-Democrat, subsequently a Communist. During the First World War took an internationalist stand, contributed to the journal *Uorbote*, theoretical organ of the Zimmerwald Left. As a leader of the Communist Party of the Netherlands pursued an ultra-Left, sectarian policy.—55

*Wilhelm II (Hohenzollern)* (1859-1941)—king of Prussia and German Emperor (1888-1918).—59, 83, 94, 397, 423

*Williams, T. Russell* (b. 1872)—English socialist, member of the Independent Labour Party of Britain. During the First World War adopted an anti-militarist stand; criticised the policy pursued by the leaders of the Second International.—55

*Wilson, Woodrow* (1856-1924)—President of the U.S.A. (1913-21), one of the organisers of the imperialist states' armed intervention against Soviet Russia.—711

## Y

*Yermolenko, D. S.* (b. 1874)—en-sign; worked in the counter intelligence service, a military spy.—133, 134

## Z

*Zenzinov, Vladimir Mikhailovich* (b. 1881)—one of the leaders of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, member of its Central Committee. During the First World War—a defencist. In 1917 was a member of the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet; advocated a bloc with the bourgeoisie.—271

*Zetkin, Clara* (1857-1933)—outstanding leader of the German and international labour movement, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany. During the First World War took a revolutionary internationalist stand and opposed social-chauvinism. At the Third Congress of the Communist International was elected a member of the Comintern Executive Committee.—682

*Zinoviev (Radomyslsky), Grigory Yevseyevich* (1883-1936)—joined the R.S.D.L.P. in 1901, was a member of its Central Committee. During the period of preparation and carrying out of the October Revolution displayed vacillation and opposed the armed uprising. The publication by Kamenev, in his own name and in the name of

Zinoviev, in the semi-Menshevik newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, of a statement declaring their disagreement with the C.C.'s resolution on the armed uprising, was divulgence of a secret decision of the Party and a betrayal of the revolution.

After the October Socialist Revolution was Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, member of the C.C. Political Bureau and Chairman of the Comintern Executive Committee. Came out repeatedly against

the Party's Leninist policy: in November 1917 advocated the setting up of a coalition government with the participation of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries; in 1925—a sponsor of the New Opposition; in 1926—one of the leaders of the anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc. In 1934 was expelled from the Party for his anti-Party activities.—15, 57, 403, 404, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 443, 445, 492

---

## SUBJECT INDEX

### A

*Accounting and control in building socialism*—234, 308-09, 311-13, 364-66, 367-69, 440, 455, 464-66, 470-74, 529, 561, 566-67, 588, 590-91, 592-93, 594, 596-601, 604, 621-22, 630, 633, 636, 646, 652-53, 655-56, 679

*Africa*—704

*Agrarian programme of the Bolsheviks*

- on the confiscation of the landlords', church, monastery and crown lands—31, 48-49, 99, 100-01, 103, 416, 417, 432, 440-41, 447-48, 468, 475
- on the nationalisation of land—31, 48-49, 98-100, 102-04
- in the socialist revolution—31, 48-50, 562

*Alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry*

- as the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—265-66, 440-41, 447-48, 449, 480, 494, 588-89
- leading role of the proletariat in—236-37, 454-55, 494, 655, 702-03

*Anarchism and anarchists*—281-84, 290, 309, 448, 598-99, 606, 649-50, 654

*Anarcho-syndicalism*—270, 363, 599

*April theses by Lenin (April 4[17] 1917)*—29-33, 297

*Autonomy, political*—108-09

### B

*Banks*

- economic essence and role of—140, 188-89, 191-92, 198, 214, 502, 597

*Blocs and agreements of the proletariat in its revolutionary struggle*  
—their essence and conditions—722-23

*Bolshevism*

- historical role and international significance of—552, 714-15
- its development and strengthening in the struggle against opportunism—437

*Bourgeoisie, the*

- as a class—121-22, 160-62, 337, 671-72, 692-93, 719, 721
- its agents in the working-class movement—53, 161-62
- its methods of struggle against the proletariat—42-43, 161-62, 240, 584-85, 710-11
- its methods of exploiting the working class—191-92, 238, 603
- nationalism and chauvinism of—52-53, 106
- its betrayal of the national interests—178, 358-59, 692-93, 701

*Boycott and tactics of boycott*—338-40

*Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty of 1918*  
—appraisal of its terms and its

- significance—516, 538-39, 547-49, 550-51, 566, 567-68, 575-76, 577, 579-81, 586, 624, 695, 706
- as an example of the Bolsheviks' strategy and tactics—480-87, 488-89, 511-13, 546-48, 549-50, 624-25, 666-67, 669-70, 707, 720
- reasons for its conclusion—480-87, 488-89, 509, 511-13, 540-41, 542-44, 544-50, 550-51, 567, 569, 572-75, 583-84, 666-70
- and the Treaty of Versailles (comparison)—720
- internal and international situation—480-87, 509, 511-13, 514-17, 531-32, 550-51, 569-70, 572-74
- as a respite from the imperialist war—480-87, 488-89, 508, 509-10, 533-34, 538-42, 576-79, 669, 694-95
- and the counter-revolutionary stand of the Mensheviks and S.R.s—575, 586, 668-70, 695, 719-20
- revolution in Germany and annulment of—485, 486, 512, 517, 522-23, 534-36, 538-39, 542-43, 578-79, 720
- Bribery and struggle against it in Soviet Russia*—597, 609, 639, 651, 656
- Building of socialism in Soviet Russia*
  - leading role of the Bolshevik Party in—436, 446, 448-49, 450-52, 513, 529, 586-90, 605-06, 615-17, 640-41, 642-45
  - and the struggle against petty-bourgeois elements—470-74, 597, 598-99, 602, 607-10, 613, 615-17, 622, 630-35, 638-39, 641-43, 643-45
  - and drawing the working peasantry in the work of building socialism—439-40, 447-48, 450-52, 467-74, 558-59, 663-64, 673-74, 712-13
  - possibility of socialism being victorious in Soviet Russia and conditions for its complete victory—436, 451-52, 480-83, 485-86, 500-01, 505, 506-07, 531-33, 552-53, 559-62, 566-67, 584-85, 589-92, 597, 619-21, 634, 637-40, 652, 657, 660-63, 682-83, 691-92, 696-97, 712-15
  - utilisation of bourgeois specialists and of the achievements of bourgeois science and technology in—368-69, 375, 472-73, 593-96, 602-03, 621, 640-41, 642-44, 660-62, 723-24
  - large-scale heavy industry as the basis of socialism and the task of socialist industrialisation of the Soviet state—601-02, 610, 618, 619, 635, 642-43
  - and cultural development—602
  - international significance of experience in—484, 506-07, 557-59, 560-62, 660, 661-63, 682-83, 692-93, 695, 696, 698
  - and petty-commodity production—632-34
  - need for studying and making use of practical experience in—604-05, 660, 671-73
  - re-education of the working masses and the struggle against the survivals of capitalism—467, 469-74, 504, 567, 590-91, 596, 598-99, 602-03, 604-05, 609, 612-13, 622, 645-46, 657, 672-73, 674-75, 676-77, 680-81, 712-14
  - raising of labour productivity as a condition of successful socialist construction—588, 592, 594, 601-03, 622
  - choice of people and checking on fulfilment—659-60
  - and building of the foundation of socialist economy—486, 566-67, 611, 619-21, 635-36
  - correct relations between the working class and the peasantry as a condition of successful building of socialism—450-52, 495-96, 675-81, 702-03
  - the role and tasks of the working class in—454-55, 471-73, 504, 550-52, 589-92, 602, 633, 634-35, 641-45, 652-57, 659-60, 673-74, 702-03, 712-14
  - the role of the working masses and their creative initiative in—372-73, 428-29, 431-32, 440, 454-55, 464, 467-74, 493-94, 496-97, 498-99, 502-05, 550-51, 559-60, 566-67, 578, 584-85, 586-92, 595, 598-99, 602, 603-06, 612-13, 660-61, 664, 673-74, 682-83, 712-14
  - socialist planning—529, 586-89, 618, 635
  - difficulties and mistakes and

ways of overcoming and correcting them—372, 455, 461-63, 467-74, 481, 496-97, 502-03, 505-06, 528-30, 558-59, 566, 589-90, 590-92, 594-95, 605-06, 612-13, 613-15, 616-17, 655-57, 658-64, 671-75, 680-81, 682-83, 711-14, 723-24

—and strengthening of the Soviet state's defence potential—214-16, 513, 550-51, 566-67, 584-85, 586-88, 619, 628-29, 649-50

—and improvement of the condition of the working people—566-67, 661, 673-74

*Bureaucratic practices and the struggle against them in Soviet Russia*

—struggle against bureaucratic distortions in the Soviet state apparatus—613-16

—and drawing the working masses into the work of state administration—613-16

## C

*Cadets (Constitutional-Democratic Party, Party of "People's Freedom")*—157-58, 653

*Cadres of socialist development*—368-69, 375, 605-06, 642-44, 659-61

*Capitalism*

—definition of—193, 588, 692-93

—inevitability of its doom—299-300, 660

*Centrism and the Centrists and the struggle against them*

—its essence—32, 35, 52-54, 56-58, 320

—as camouflaged social-chauvinism—52-54, 56-58

*Chauvinism*—106-07, 108-09, 165

*Classes and class struggle*

—the meaning and the aims of the class struggle—155, 254-55

*Classes and class struggle in Soviet Russia*—455, 458-59, 495-96, 497-99, 591-98, 599, 630-35, 647-48, 650, 651-57, 675-76, 677-78, 690-91, 692-94, 695, 697-98, 701-03, 711-13, 722-25

*Communism*—59, 302-03, 304-13, 552-53, 565, 645-46, 661, 665

*Communist education*—599

*Communist International (Comintern. Third International)*—as an international proletarian organisation of a new type—57-59

*Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.)*

—as a party of a new type—171-72, 552-54

—struggle for unity and discipline within the party—406-09, 410-13, 414, 437-38, 444-46, 511, 564

—as a contingent of the international proletariat and its role in the world revolutionary movement—51-52, 57-59, 64, 90-91, 94, 343, 385, 391, 505-06, 512, 550-51, 552-54, 556, 558, 682-83, 691-92, 707, 714-15

—as inspirer and organiser of the October Socialist Revolution of 1917—26-28, 29-33, 42-43, 68-70, 103-04, 105, 115-16, 119-20, 124-25, 127-29, 137-40, 144-45, 164-65, 172-75, 176-81, 207, 228-29, 328-30, 331-35, 336-37, 340, 343-50, 352, 355-56, 386-90, 391-92, 393-94, 395-400, 401-02, 403-05, 406-09, 410-13, 414, 415-16, 435-36, 437-38, 443-46, 526-28, 531-33, 571, 573-75, 588-89, 613, 661-62, 691-92

—and the rout of the foreign interventionists and the landowner and bourgeois counter-revolution in Russia—513, 690, 696, 697-98

—as leader in the building of socialism—586-90, 605-06, 642-45, 661-63

—criticism and self-criticism in the Party—336, 340, 341

*Compromises in politics*—171-75, 333, 340, 600-01, 621-22, 638-39, 708-09

*Compulsion and persuasion*—472-74, 588-90, 593-94, 603, 606-13

*Conversion of the imperialist war into civil war, as a slogan of the proletarian party*—21, 22, 73-74, 213-16, 235-37, 527

**Counter-revolution**

- international character of—230, 395, 647, 687-88, 692-93
- social basis of—135-36, 143, 150, 230, 377, 693-94, 701-02

**Criticism and self-criticism**—336, 339-41**Culture**

- bourgeois—110, 269, 569, 603, 661-62
- the proletariat's attitude towards the cultural heritage of the past—554-55, 603, 643-44, 661-62
- proletarian, socialist—109-10

**D**

*Decree on Land of October 26 (November 8), 1917*—425-29, 433, 436, 439, 441-42, 447-48, 681-82, 713

*Decree on Peace of October 26 (November 8), 1917*—419-25, 433, 439

*Defence of the socialist fatherland*—125-26, 168, 214-16, 333-34, 433, 484, 509-10, 511, 513, 514-17, 524-25, 534-35, 539-40, 542-43, 550-51, 567-68, 581, 584-85, 586-88, 619, 628-29, 649-50, 657, 682-83, 686-87, 691-92, 695-96, 697-98, 717

*Democracy, bourgeois (as a form of state)*—47, 60-61, 161-62, 185, 210, 246-47, 250-51, 270-72, 276-77, 295-96, 301-02, 303, 322-23, 500-01, 610, 713-14, 720-21

*Democracy, bourgeois (as a political trend)*—217-18

*Democracy, proletarian (socialist)*—60-61, 189-90, 191-92, 194-95, 203, 209-11, 250, 261-62, 267-69, 272, 294-96, 297-98, 301-04, 310-11, 318-19, 323-24, 473, 558-59, 610, 612-13, 614, 615-16, 713-14

*Democratic centralism in the Party*—373-74

**Dictatorship, proletarian (theory)**

- its essence and the tasks of—46, 111-12, 223-25, 249-50, 253-56, 261-62, 273-74, 278-81, 283-86, 301-04, 370-73, 606-08, 611, 613, 622, 713-14
- as the key-stone of Marxism—

46-47, 252-55, 256-58, 261-62, 506, 606-08

*Discipline, party*—406-07, 410-13, 437-38, 511

*Dual power in Russia in 1917*—24-25, 30-31, 34-36, 39-41, 64, 67, 69-70, 95-96, 118-19, 123-24, 125-26, 135-36, 148-49, 151, 157-61, 343, 363-64

**E****Economics**

- definition of—659, 673
- and politics—294-95

*Electrification in Soviet Russia*—618

*Entente, the*—22-23

**Equality**

- bourgeois and petty-bourgeois idea of—310, 713-14
- Marxist concept of—310-11, 713-14

*Equality of races and nations*—109, 110, 706

**F**

*Factions and factionalism in the Party*—535, 538-39, 564

**Fatherland**

- bourgeois—707
- the need for a historical approach to the concept "fatherland"—628-29
- and the proletariat—60, 96-97, 628-29
- socialist—168, 509-10, 511, 515-16, 534, 568, 581, 583-85, 628-29

**First World War of 1914-18**

- its nature and motives—21, 23, 29, 38, 43, 44, 45, 61-62, 70-71, 82-33, 92-93, 111, 114, 120-21, 122-23, 124-25, 126, 156, 158, 162, 163-64, 165, 166, 177, 215, 238-39, 244-45, 326, 384, 460, 561, 565, 691-92, 700, 704, 705-06, 707, 711-12
- tasks of the proletariat and Bolshevik tactics with regard to the war—29-30, 43-45, 70-76, 81-94, 120-22, 123, 124-25, 126, 166-67, 168, 213-14, 215-16, 628-29

- distress and destitution of the working masses as a result of—22, 82-83, 92, 156, 166-67, 238, 372, 460, 494, 531, 590, 675, 695-96, 705-06, 709-10, 711-12
  - the Bolsheviks' struggle against social-chauvinism and social-imperialism—21, 52-53
  - the Bolshevik Party's struggle against Centrist and social-pacifism—52-54
  - the question of peace and ways of revolutionary withdrawal from the war—29-30, 45, 56, 61-62, 74-76, 79, 82-83, 87-92, 93-94, 115, 121-26, 130, 159, 167, 170, 179, 213-16, 228, 236-37, 333-34, 335, 691-92, 696, 714-15
  - outcome and consequences of—20-21, 22, 50-51, 61-62, 76-78, 111-12, 114, 115, 119, 122-23, 186-88, 201, 212-13, 216, 224, 238, 460, 529, 531, 553-55, 567-68, 653, 672, 674-75, 675-76, 695-96, 705-06, 710-12
  - and the slogan of peace without indemnities or annexations—71-72, 84-86, 89, 94, 121-23, 179, 335, 419-23, 423-25, 476
  - and the slogan of the defeat of one's own government—22, 483
  - and the slogan of converting the imperialist war into a civil war and the ways of its implementation—21, 22, 45, 73-74, 93-94, 213-14, 216, 235-37, 527, 537-38
  - and the national-colonial question—85, 125-26
  - enrichment of capitalists during the war and as a result of it—51, 56, 83, 92, 120, 125-26, 156, 184, 196-98, 705, 706
  - aggravation of the contradictions of capitalism and its general crisis—20, 22, 122-23, 129, 166, 212-13, 216, 460, 530-31, 537-38, 555-56, 586-88, 619, 666-67, 669, 671, 674-75, 705, 714-15
  - and the October Socialist Revolution—419, 422, 460, 527, 565, 584-85, 691-92, 698, 706, 707, 709-10, 714-15
  - and weakening of the entire capitalist system and breakthrough of the chain of imperialism at its weakest link—45, 216, 691-92, 698, 714
  - and revolutionisation of the masses—20, 21, 27-28, 125-26, 177, 212-13, 238, 425, 674-75, 682, 714-15
  - and the revolutionary situation in Western Europe—20, 22, 342-43, 395, 402, 403-04, 625, 675
  - and the revolutionary crisis in tsarist Russia—20-23
  - and socialist revolution in Europe and the world revolution—53-54, 77-78, 111-13, 125-28, 130, 217, 238-39, 402, 481, 624-25, 675, 714-15
  - lessons and historical significance of—460, 705
  - conditions of Soviet Russia's withdrawal from the war—419-25, 460, 476, 480-87, 488-89, 566, 583-85, 625-26, 694-96, 698, 706-07, 714
  - and February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 in Russia—19-28, 45, 125, 216-17, 570
- Foreign military intervention and Civil War in Soviet Russia*
- causes and inevitability of—686, 690-92, 696, 698, 700-701, 716-17
  - the Party's leading role in the rout of the foreign interventionists and of the bourgeois and landowner counter-revolution at home—513, 690-91, 696, 697-98
  - struggle of the Soviet people against the foreign interventionists and the counter-revolution at home was a patriotic war—509-10, 524-25, 550-51, 568
  - and political and military alliance of the working-class and the peasantry—699
  - historical lessons of—701
  - sources of the Soviet Republic's invincibility—714-15, 717
- Foreign policy of the Soviet state*
- fundamental principles of—419-25, 476, 481-82, 483, 515-16, 534-35, 584-85, 648, 706-07
  - Decree on Peace of October 26 (November 8), 1917—419-25, 433, 439
  - and annulment of tsarist Russia's debts—464, 476, 503, 584
  - international significance of—476, 485-86, 506, 669-70, 695, 707



- peace proposals of the Soviet government—419-25, 706
- and different capitalist countries—485-86, 648-49, 706
- exposure of secret diplomacy by publishing the tsarist government's treaties—421, 424, 458-59, 476, 484, 489, 515, 584, 707
- Foundation of socialist economy*—566-67, 611, 619, 635

## G

- German Social-Democratic Party*
  - general characteristic of—301, 319
  - struggle of the Left wing against the social-chauvinists and the Centrists within the Party and their break away during the First World War of 1914-18—33, 54-55

*Great-power chauvinism*—43-44

## H

*Hegemony of the proletariat*—254-56

## I

- Ideology, bourgeois*—86-87, 292
- Imperialism*
  - its essence and main features—193-94, 195-97, 211, 260-61, 286-87, 530-31, 553, 696
- Industrialisation, socialist (in Soviet Russia)*—601-02, 611, 618, 619, 635, 639-40, 642-44
- Industry in Russia*
  - general characteristic of—193-96, 198-201
- Industry in Soviet Russia*
  - tasks, ways and rate of its restoration and development—643-45, 673-74
  - heavy industry as the basis of socialism—611, 635, 642-43
- Inner-Party struggle*—437-38
- Intelligentsia, bourgeois and petty*

*bourgeois, in Soviet Russia*—461-62, 467-69, 471, 472-73, 584, 602, 614-15, 625-26, 642-43, 644, 675-76, 723-24

## *Internationalism, proletarian*

- its essence—51-52, 71, 84, 92-93, 110, 347
- and the struggle against opportunism, nationalism and chauvinism—44, 51-53, 54-57, 106-07
- unity of the proletariat's national and international tasks—51-52, 106-07, 628-29, 720
- and international solidarity of the working people—84, 94, 347, 568, 578, 583, 584-85, 628-29, 682-83
- as a prerequisite for the victory of the socialist revolution—53-56, 91-92, 94, 111 13, 393, 503-06, 707, 720

## J

*July days of 1917*—132-36, 137-40, 141-42, 143-45, 146-47, 148-54, 163-64, 165-66, 172, 176-78, 227-30, 235, 297, 332, 387-89, 397-98, 401, 514, 526-27, 570-71

## K

- Kautsky, Kautskianism and the struggle against it*
  - Kautskianism as the Centrist trend in the Second International—32, 35, 52-54, 56-58, 261-62, 319-20
  - criticism of Kautsky's anti-Marxist views on the state, proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy—35, 46-47, 59-61, 239, 241, 242-43, 245, 254-55, 257-58, 261-62, 264-65, 268-69, 275-76, 285-86, 314-26

## L

- Labour discipline in Soviet Russia*—466, 467-74, 550-51, 584, 590-91, 596, 602-03, 604-05, 609, 611, 612-13, 622, 641-42, 643-45, 662-64, 673, 713-14
- Labour heroism*—469-70, 655, 712, 713, 714-15
- Labour productivity*
  - in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism and un-

- der socialism—473-74, 588, 591-92, 594, 599, 601-03, 622, 645-46  
 —its significance for the victory of the new social system—588, 591-92, 594, 601-03  
*Labour, socialist and communist*—304-06, 307-09, 467-74  
*Laws, socialist (revolutionary)*—440, 441, 466, 639, 655, 675  
*Left Socialist-Revolutionaries (S R s)*  
 —general characteristic of—360-61, 494-95, 524, 610, 616-17, 622, 633, 634-35, 640-41, 649-50, 653-54, 670, 675, 677-78, 681-83, 694, 698, 708-09  
 —the Bolsheviks' temporary agreement with them in 1917-18—435, 442, 445-46, 448-49, 450-51, 479, 494-95, 668-69, 675, 681

## M

- Menshevism, Mensheviks and the struggle against them*—30, 32, 41, 46, 64-65, 85, 128, 131, 139, 144, 162-63, 165-66, 181, 210-11, 213, 217-18, 222, 242, 254, 271-72, 309, 325, 607, 622, 635, 636-37, 641-42, 719, 721-22  
*Monopoly, capitalist*—211, 260, 286-87

## N

- National and colonial question, in the epoch of imperialism*—71-72, 85-86, 92-93, 105-09, 109-10, 418-19, 476, 705  
*Nationalism*  
 —Great-Power—44  
*National-liberation wars*—541-42  
*National policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet state*—418, 476, 486, 515  
*National programme of the Bolsheviks*—50-51, 109-10

## O

- October Socialist Revolution (1917) in Russia*

- its prerequisites: the international and internal situation—127-29, 172, 176-81, 216-18, 226-37, 328-30, 336-37, 342-50, 355-56, 357-60, 395-400, 401-02, 403-05, 439-40, 457, 514, 516, 526-27, 529-31, 535-36, 569-74  
 —leading role of the Bolshevik Party—328-30, 331-35, 340, 343-50, 352, 355-56, 391-92, 393-94, 395-400, 401-02, 403-05, 406-08, 410-13, 415-16, 434, 435-36, 443-46, 450-52, 526-28, 573-74, 588-90, 613  
 —its character and motive forces—153, 235, 236-37, 357-60, 408-09, 447-48, 449, 454-55, 457, 459, 460, 478-79, 480, 514, 516, 528-30, 573-74, 586-89, 590, 608, 638-39, 654-55, 656, 661-62, 693-94  
 —Second Congress of the Soviets: establishment of the Soviet state and the decrees on peace and the land—418-30, 433, 435-36, 437-38, 441-42, 443-46, 447-48, 457, 458, 493, 669, 681-82, 706, 712-13  
 —world historic significance of—351, 436, 460, 470, 481-83, 500-02, 505-07, 514-17, 522-23, 526, 530-31, 550-51, 556, 558-59, 565-68, 573-74, 575, 576-77, 582-83, 584-85, 613, 624, 661-63, 669-70, 682-83, 691-92, 696, 700, 707, 712-13, 714-15  
 —causes of its victory—526-31, 531-35, 571-72, 574

*One-man management and the principle of collective leadership in building socialism*—610-13, 622

*Opportunism*

- its essence and social roots—240, 247, 255, 262, 268-69, 274-76, 277, 314, 315-17, 324-25

## P

*Pacifism and pacifists*

- bourgeois—54, 74, 108, 484  
 —social-pacifism as a variety of bourgeois pacifism—54, 57-58

*Paris Commune of 1871*

- its lessons and historical significance—33, 46-47, 76, 79, 174-

- 75, 249, 260-61, 263-78, 282-83,  
292, 322, 324, 473, 557, 559, 563
- Parliamentarism*  
—its essence—46, 47, 221-22, 270-  
72, 318, 325, 615  
—and proletarian dictatorship—  
47, 712-14
- Parliamentary tactics of the Bolshe-  
viks*—338-40, 536-37
- Party Programme, the*  
—its essence and significance—  
554-57, 558-60  
—maximum programme—558-61  
—minimum programme—31, 97,  
228, 456, 559-60  
—its theoretical principles—97,  
553, 566-67
- Party propaganda*  
—its content and role in general  
Party work—42
- Patriotism*  
—definition of—719-20  
—criticism of bourgeois pseudo-  
patriotism—568  
—proletarian—515-17, 714, 719-  
20
- Peace Treaty of Versailles, 1919*—  
720
- Peasantry*  
—its dual nature and vacillations  
between the proletariat and the  
bourgeoisie—697  
—condition under capitalism—255,  
269  
—radical change in its condition  
after the October Socialist Rev-  
olution—713  
—small-commodity economy and  
the danger of the restoration of  
capitalism—631-34
- Petty bourgeois*—41, 606, 633, 719,  
720, 721
- Petty-bourgeois revolutionism*—272,  
622, 630, 644-45
- Planning of national economy in So-  
viet Russia*—447-48  
—tasks and principles of planning  
in building socialism—529, 618,  
635  
—plan for the electrification of  
Russia and the national plan of  
economic development—618
- Political parties in Russia*  
—general characteristic of—127-  
28, 130-31, 158-59, 640-41
- Politics*  
—definition of—536, 718-19  
—and economics—282-83, 294-95,  
373, 692-93
- Pravda (Listok "Pravdy", Rabochy*  
(1917), *Rabochy Put*—Bolshevik  
legal weekly and from 1917 Cen-  
tral Organ of the Bolshevik Party)  
—28, 33, 36, 64, 67, 75, 94, 96, 105,  
126, 129, 136, 137, 151, 152, 170,  
197, 229, 291, 336, 350, 358, 394,  
400, 408, 409, 413, 436, 446, 449,  
455, 463, 474, 479, 508, 517, 563,  
585, 617, 646, 657, 715, 725
- Press, the, under capitalism*—64, 75,  
82, 137, 170, 195, 197, 408, 718
- Productive forces*  
—under imperialism—704-05  
—in the period of transition from  
capitalism to socialism—308, 589-  
91, 601-02  
—under socialism and communism  
—308-09  
—and relations of production—  
247, 304-06
- Proletariat in Russia*—22, 41, 140,  
153, 216, 224, 697  
—its role in the international  
working-class movement—57-58,  
66, 505-06, 576-77, 714  
—its hegemony in revolutionary  
movement—19, 22, 25-26, 27, 28,  
112-13, 127-29, 130, 140, 144,  
150-51, 178, 336-37  
—its historical role—23, 24-25, 27-  
28, 127-29, 153, 166-67, 178-79,  
181, 216, 234, 237, 372-73, 383,  
385, 505-07, 660, 711-12
- Property*  
—private—84, 99, 102, 111-12,  
189, 196-97, 200-201, 210, 269,  
275-76, 279-80, 304-07, 480, 660,  
692-93  
—socialist—248-49, 250, 269, 275-  
77, 304-07, 309, 310, 427-28, 440,  
441, 464, 475
- Provisional Government in Russia in*  
*1917*—23-25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 35-36,  
37-39, 43, 64-65, 68-69, 73, 83, 92-  
93, 95-96, 114, 118, 120-21, 125,  
126, 128, 130, 132, 135-36, 139, 141,  
143, 144, 146-47, 148-50, 151-52,  
156-57, 158, 159-62, 163-64, 165,  
184-86, 193-96, 203-04, 205-06,  
217-18, 220, 222-23, 224, 246-47,  
343, 379-80, 514, 526, 570-71

## R

*Red Army*—479, 484, 486, 499-500, 539, 542-43, 544, 550-51, 619, 717

*Reformism and the struggle against it*—55-56, 119-20, 254-55, 261-62, 286-87, 374, 710

*Republic, democratic (bourgeois)*

—its essence and significance—47, 60-61, 157, 184-85, 211-12, 221-22, 245-47, 251, 270-72, 287, 289, 294, 295-96, 301-02, 337, 500, 713, 721-23

—and parliamentarism as a guise of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—46-47, 60-61, 221-22, 246-47, 270-72, 616-17

*Revisionism and the struggle against it*

—renunciation of the Marxist theory of class struggle, socialist revolution and proletarian dictatorship—238-39, 242, 248-53, 254-55, 257-58, 261-62, 263-65, 268-69, 273-76, 280-83, 313-26

*Revolution*

—its essence and role in social development—19, 155, 161, 176, 233, 250-52, 266, 282-83, 376, 522, 607-08, 611, 662, 668, 675, 710-11

—the question of power as the fundamental issue of revolution—34, 76-77, 148, 150-51, 219-25, 243-44, 415-16, 500-01, 640-41, 693-94

—variety of ways and uneven development of revolution in various countries—66, 81, 90-91, 506-07, 531, 534-36, 537-38, 539, 570-71, 572-74, 616-17, 708-09, 714-15

—objective conditions for its breaking out and development—90-91, 212-13, 506-07, 522, 572-73, 674-75

—its political prerequisites and conditions for its victory—91-92, 331-32, 506-07, 527-28, 607-08, 711-12

—and reform—56, 131

*Revolution, bourgeois and bourgeois-democratic*

—its essence and tasks—528, 588

—and the hegemony of the proletariat—27-28, 150-51, 336-37

—its motive forces—336-37, 588

—development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution—27-28, 30

—and socialist revolution—528-29, 588, 712

*Revolution, bourgeois-democratic, in Russia*

—its motive forces—336-37

—the Bolshevik Party's strategy and tactics in the revolution (general principles)—336-37

*Revolution, bourgeois-democratic, of 1905-07 in Russia*

—its motive forces—337

—its international significance—90, 504-05, 613-14

—Soviets as organs of the insurrection and the embryo of new, revolutionary power—117-18, 526, 528-29, 713

*Revolution, bourgeois-democratic, of February 1917 in Russia*

—its character and significance—19-20, 21, 22, 23-24, 25-26, 34, 37, 39-42, 68, 128, 130, 155-67, 182-84, 203-04, 216-17, 239, 243-45, 514, 570

—and leading role of the Bolshevik Party and its tasks—26-28, 336-37, 526

—and the bourgeois Provisional Government—23-27, 34, 37-38, 39-40, 67-68, 71-72, 95-96, 125-26, 157-58, 159-61, 514, 570

—and the hegemony of the proletariat—23-24, 26-28, 336-37, 514, 526, 570, 654-55

—its motive forces—21-22, 23-24, 27, 115-16, 336-37, 514, 526, 570

—and the dual power—24-25, 30-31, 34-36, 39-42, 64, 67, 68-70, 95-96, 118-19, 126, 132, 148-50, 151, 157-61, 343, 363-64

—its growing over into the socialist revolution—19, 25-26, 27-28, 30, 42-43, 45, 65, 69, 104-05, 126, 216-17, 233-37, 336-38, 342, 345-48, 356, 382-83, 385, 570-72, 720

—its prerequisites and the causes of its victory over tsarism—19-24, 115-16, 216, 526, 570

—the Revolution of 1905-07 as a prologue and dress rehearsal to it—19-20, 216, 526, 528-29, 570

- and Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—21, 25, 34-36, 39-40, 45, 46, 78-79, 118-19, 126, 148-49, 158-59, 362-64, 526, 528
- and the petty-bourgeois parties' conciliatory policy—23, 25-26, 159-61, 165-66, 267, 337, 363, 513, 570, 577-78, 640-41, 719
- Revolution, socialist (proletarian)*
  - its essence and tasks—27-28, 91-92, 115, 154, 179-81, 216, 253-54, 320-21, 322, 326, 361-63, 364-69, 376, 449, 504-05, 528-29, 586-89, 590, 598-99, 601, 604-05, 707, 710-12
  - possibility of socialism's victory first in a single country and conditions for its complete victory—436, 480-83, 486, 500-501, 505-07, 516-17, 532-33, 566-67, 619-21, 661-63, 691-92, 696, 711-15
  - and the question of the possible peaceful transfer of power to the proletariat in exceptional cases—172, 233-34, 237, 288, 337-38, 391-92, 637-40
  - the hegemony of the proletariat, the driving forces of the revolution, and its reserves—27-28, 102-03, 112, 166-67, 178, 216, 217, 233-34, 254-56, 265-66, 277, 333, 336-37, 363, 382-83, 404, 447-48, 454-55, 485, 495, 586-89, 607-08, 656, 693-99
  - winning of the dictatorship of the proletariat and building of socialism as its main task—34-35, 75-77, 219-20, 224-25, 250, 253-58, 261-62, 281, 356, 462, 505, 554-56, 580-91
  - its fundamental difference from the bourgeois and the bourgeois-democratic revolutions—336, 528-29, 586-89
  - necessity of violence during the revolution—227, 242-43, 251, 252, 282, 302, 335, 366, 367-68, 495-97, 555, 606, 607-08, 675-76, 711-12
  - uneven development of capitalism and possibility of breaking through the chain of imperialism at its weakest link—45, 714-15
  - objective conditions needed for its breaking out and development—76-78, 90-91, 111-12, 212-13, 238, 286-87, 365, 481, 515-16, 531-33, 535-36, 553-55, 635-36, 714-15
  - its specific features in countries with considerable survivals of feudal relations and a predominating peasant population—50, 495-96, 528, 632-33, 638-39
  - its political prerequisites and conditions for its victory—27, 91-92, 111-12, 236, 238, 342-43, 395-96, 516-17, 531-33, 535-36, 674-75, 709-10, 714-15
  - break-up of the old, bourgeois state machine and creation of a new state apparatus—47, 75-77, 220-21, 242-43, 249-53, 256-61, 263-69, 272-78, 285, 294-96, 311, 314, 315-17, 318-19, 320, 322, 324-26, 361-65, 367, 369-73, 374-75, 499-501, 506, 571-72, 671
  - conditions for its development in individual capitalist countries—66, 81-82, 395-96, 506-07, 531-33, 534-36, 537-38, 572-74, 708-10, 714-15
- Revolutionary adventurism*—80, 87, 484-85, 488-89, 511-13, 514-15, 519-25, 533-40, 567, 574-76, 579-80, 625-26, 639-42, 649-50
- Revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry*—34-35, 40
- Revolutionary movement in Russia*
  - leading role of the Bolshevik Party in it—29-33, 127-29, 137, 138, 144-45, 164, 176-77, 227-31, 235, 343-47
  - its character and trend of development—19-28
  - stages and conditions of its development—19-20
- Revolutionary movement, international*
  - influence of the October Socialist Revolution on its development—421-23, 505-07, 512, 531, 691-92, 700, 714-15, 716
  - significance of its experience—33, 256-58, 263-64, 421-23, 505-06, 607-08, 661-63, 710-11
  - conditions for its development—505-06, 607-08

*Revolutionary situation and revolutionary crisis*

- and war—22, 331-32
- and the general national crisis—345-46, 388
- and the revolution—22
- and the proletarian party's tactics—331-32

*Revolutionary traditions*—506, 709-10*Revolutionary wars*—29, 74-75, 108-09, 125-26, 213-14, 333-34, 704-05*Right of nations to self-determination* (a clause in the Programme of the Bolsheviks)

- approach to the question prior to 1913—105-06
- in the period of preparing for the October Socialist Revolution—50, 84-86, 93, 105-09, 109-10
- under the dictatorship of the proletariat—50, 86, 294-95, 418, 475, 477, 486

## S

*Scientific organisation of labour*—603, 622*Second International*

- role of the Bolshevik Party in the struggle against opportunism and in uniting the Left within the Second International—552-54
- defection of its parties to the social-chauvinist and Centrist positions and the split among them during the First World War of 1914-18—51-58, 552-53, 556
- hostile policy of its opportunist leaders towards Soviet power—615-16
- distortion by its opportunist leaders of the Marxist teaching on the state and the proletarian dictatorship—59-61, 253-55, 257-58, 274-76, 277, 282-91, 313-26, 557
- collapse of—61-62, 239, 313, 552-53
- its support for the imperialist bourgeoisie—61-62
- its leaders' renunciation of the struggle for the victory of socialist revolution—283-84, 313

*Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.(B.) in Petrograd on April 24-29 (May 7-12), 1917*

- its historical significance—66, 114-15
- on the agrarian question—68, 78-79, 97-104
- and the struggle against the opportunist elements within the Party—80-82, 107-09
- on the bourgeois Provisional Government—67-70, 71-72, 73, 74, 80-81, 95-96, 103, 114
- on the imperialist war—70-79, 82-94, 114-15, 527
- on the national question—84-86, 93, 105-09, 109-10
- on the new stage of the revolution and the Bolsheviks' strategic plan—68-70, 81, 104-05, 115, 116
- on the revision of the Programme and changing of the Party's name—96-97
- on the Soviets—68-70, 75-77, 103-05
- on the current situation and the Party's tasks and slogans—67-82, 111-13, 114-16, 119-21

*Social-chauvinism and the struggle against it*

- its essence and social roots—32, 35, 51-53, 238-39, 240, 244-45, 247, 252-53, 705

*Social-Democracy of Poland and Lithuania*

- Polish Social-Democrats' views on the national question and criticism of their attitude—105-06, 290

*Socialism*

- definition and principles of—28, 60, 111-12, 210-13, 304-07, 309-10, 468, 590-91, 591-92, 603, 635-36, 645-46, 651-52, 661, 680-81
- possibility of socialism being victorious first in a single country and the conditions for its complete victory—210-13, 355-56, 436, 451-52, 480-83, 486, 500-01, 505, 506-07, 516-17, 532-33, 559, 561-62, 566-67, 568, 584-85, 590-91, 619-21, 635-36, 639-40, 652-53, 657-63, 691-92, 696, 711-15

- and the state—46-47, 77-79, 247, 248-49, 253-56, 268-69, 272-74, 277-78, 281-86, 294-96, 297-98, 306-08, 309-11, 323-24, 562, 622, 635-36, 645-46, 652, 713-15
- and democracy—46-47, 268-69, 272, 278, 295, 298, 309-11, 323, 562, 646, 713-14
- material and production basis of —212-13, 273-74, 305, 451-52, 486, 601-02, 611, 619-21, 635-36, 637, 639-40, 661-62
- its political prerequisites, socialist revolution and proletarian dictatorship—77-79, 111-13, 211-12, 269, 355-56, 363-64, 448-49, 451-52, 486, 494-97, 506-07, 562, 590-91, 601-02, 603, 606-07, 611-13, 622, 634-36, 637, 652, 712-15
- economic preconditions of—77-78, 79, 111-12, 112-13, 192-95, 210-13, 269, 273-74, 286-87, 299, 364-67, 385, 448-49, 451-52, 460, 468, 566-67, 591-93, 597, 599-600, 601-02, 603, 635-36, 639-40, 642-43, 660-72
- Socialism, utopian*—277, 300, 462
- Socialist emulation*—467-74, 603-06, 622
- Socialist fatherland*—509-10, 511, 515-16, 534-35, 568, 581, 584-85, 628-29
- Socialist-Revolutionaries (S.R.s) and the struggle against them*
  - their class and political nature—30, 41-42, 49-50, 64-65, 72-73, 84, 93, 123, 131, 144, 159-61, 162, 165-66, 210-11, 213, 217-18, 219, 222, 242, 246-47, 255, 271-72, 309, 324, 325, 622, 653, 719, 721-22
- Socialist transformation of agriculture (theory of)*—31, 49-50, 100-01, 104, 451, 495-96, 562, 712-13
- Socialist transformation of agriculture in Soviet Russia*
  - leading role of the Party and the role of the Soviet state in—494-95, 562, 681-83
  - artels, communes and co-operative societies for joint cultivation of the land as enterprises of a socialist type—681-83
  - significance of the nationalisa-

- tion of land—562, 681-82, 712-13
- its methods and principles—494-96, 562
- as a component part of the plan for building socialism—562, 712-14
- and strengthening of the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry (linking of town and country) — 451-52, 494-96
- Soviet Russia and the capitalist world*
  - treaties with capitalist countries —522, 524-25, 550-51, 584-85
  - peace policy of the Soviet state —418, 419-25, 482-87, 506, 509, 584-85, 648-49, 691-92, 706-07
  - peaceful coexistence of the socialist and capitalist systems and their economic competition—522
- Soviets, the*
  - world-historical significance of —46-48, 77-79, 91, 362-63, 364, 525, 557-59, 713-15
  - as a new, higher type of democracy—46-48, 60-61, 117-19, 220-21, 222, 362-63, 456, 478-79, 557-59, 562, 563, 566, 608, 610, 613-16, 714-15
  - specific features of the Soviets as a political form of proletarian dictatorship—46-48, 59-61, 76-77, 78-79, 104-05, 113, 118-19, 220-22, 224-25, 309, 325, 361-64, 365-67, 418, 440, 456, 471, 478-79, 493-507, 528-29, 558-59, 560, 562, 583, 591-92, 608, 613-14, 615-16, 637, 713-15
- Soviets in Russia in 1905*
  - as a new form of mass struggle and mass organisation—528-29
  - as organs of the insurrection and an embryo of new, revolutionary power—117-18, 526, 528-29, 713-14
- Soviet socialist state*
  - as a new type of state and higher form of democracy—440, 456, 478-79, 493-94, 501-02, 525, 528-29, 552-53, 557-60, 562, 563, 566, 571-72, 583, 588-89, 591-92, 603, 608, 610, 613-16, 634, 711-15

- the Bolshevik Party's leading role in—435-36, 437, 443-46, 448-49, 450-52, 457, 559, 586-88, 589-90, 605-06, 612, 640-41
- world-historical significance of—486, 488-89, 501-02, 557-59, 566, 571-72, 582-83, 584-85, 608, 682-83, 691-92, 693, 694-96, 698, 707, 714-15
- sources of its strength and invincibility—425, 493-94, 701, 713-15, 724-25
- and public socialist property as its economic basis—619-21
- as an instrument of the proletariat for building socialism—449, 456, 590-92, 598-604, 631, 634, 651-52, 658
- its characteristic features and fundamental difference from the bourgeois state—425, 449, 468, 498-500, 501-02, 506, 598-99, 611, 615-16, 634-35, 672, 713-15
- its links with the masses and drawing of the latter into the work of state administration—428-29, 431-32, 440, 454-55, 469-74, 493-94, 496-97, 498-504, 557-58, 559, 571-72, 588-89, 603, 605-06, 607-08, 613-16, 660-61, 667, 672-73, 712-15
- alliance of the working class and the peasantry as its basis—441-42, 448-49, 445-52, 494-95, 586-89

## State

- its essence and its role in society—60-61, 151, 211, 238-51, 254-58, 263, 268, 276-78, 294, 295-96, 297-98, 303-04, 311, 364, 374, 425, 449, 558
- origin and development of—241, 243-45, 247
- historical types and forms of—26, 46-48, 60, 77-78, 96-97, 107-08, 248, 262, 268, 287, 289-91, 294, 299-300, 302-04, 557, 557-59, 567-68, 644-46, 652
- criticism of anti-Marxist views on—60-61, 107-08, 239, 240-42, 249-52, 253-55, 257-58, 262, 264-65, 268-69, 274-76, 277-78, 278, 280-84, 285-91, 292-94, 295-96, 298-300, 313-26
- conditions for its withering away—247, 248-53, 257, 278, 280-85, 295-97, 298-313, 324, 614

## Statistics

- criticism of bourgeois statistics and exposure of its falsifications—605

## Strategy and tactics of the Bolsheviks

- flexibility of their tactics and account of the concrete historical situation—23-24, 42, 61-62, 73-74, 144-45, 148-54, 168-70, 171-75, 331-35, 336-37, 338-39, 340, 348-50, 389, 394, 396-99, 428-29, 483-84, 486-87, 488-89, 511-13, 516-17, 521-23, 524-25, 532-34, 544-50, 569-83, 588-90, 590-92, 593-94, 600-01, 614-15, 619, 625, 627-28, 629, 638-39, 648, 708-09, 722-25
- and the experience of the international and Russian revolutionary movement—152-54, 227, 228, 336, 338-39, 386-87, 488-89, 528-29, 569-70, 576-77, 669, 720-22
- main rules of strategy and tactics—340, 516-17, 532-33, 569-70, 574-75, 625

## Strike, the

- as a form of the class struggle of the proletariat, its role and significance—517, 533

*Survivals of capitalism in the minds of people and the struggle against them in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism in Soviet Russia*—210-13, 355-56, 451-52, 480-83, 485-86, 500-01, 505, 506-07, 516-17, 532-33, 559, 562, 566-67, 568, 584-85, 590-91, 619-21, 635, 639-40, 652, 657, 660-61, 691-92, 696, 712-15

## T

### *Trade unions in Soviet Russia*

- their significance and place in the system of proletarian dictatorship—660-61
- their role and tasks in building socialism—455, 602, 662-63

### *Theory of "peaceful growing of capitalism into socialism" and its criticism*—325

### *Theory, revolutionary*

- essence of—385, 462, 660-62



—its significance in the class struggle of the proletariat—119, 660

## U

*United States of America (U.S.A.)*—  
265, 704-05

## V

*Victory of socialism in one country (theory of)*—210-13, 356, 451-52, 480-83, 486, 500, 505, 506-07, 516-17, 532-33, 559, 562, 566-67, 568, 584-85, 590, 619-21, 635, 639-40, 652, 660-63, 691-92, 696, 712-15

## W

*Workers' control over the production and distribution of products*

—its essence and significance—  
112-13, 188-91, 193-94, 196-97, 199-201, 203, 209, 309, 364-66, 367-69, 599-600, 604, 621-22, 656

*Working class in Soviet Russia*

—and the struggle for raising labour productivity and for a new socialist labour discipline—466, 473-74, 586, 588-89, 590-91, 596, 601-03, 609, 612-13, 641-42, 643-45, 650, 662-63, 663-64, 673, 713  
—and the struggle against petty-bourgeois influence among the workers—470, 473-74, 598-99, 602, 609-10, 622, 633, 643-44, 656-57, 713-14  
—its heroism at the front and in the rear—700-01, 712-13  
—its leading role in state administration and the building of socialism—454-55, 468-74, 493-94, 504-05, 608, 629, 643-44,

654-57, 659-60, 661-68, 672, 674, 713-14

—its leading role in relation to the non-proletarian masses—454-55, 470, 614, 616-17, 656-57, 722-24  
—and training of managerial and executive personnel and cadres of skilled workers and engineers—712-14

*Working-class movement in Russia*

—and leading role of the Bolshevik Party—228-29, 232, 235, 388-89  
—its influence on the peasant movement—27-28  
—role of the proletariat of Russia in the international working-class movement—66  
—forms of—127-28, 137-40, 161, 164-65, 172

*Working-class movement, international*

—role of the Bolshevik Party and the proletariat of Russia in it—  
51-52, 57-58, 66, 81, 90-91, 94, 343, 421-23, 505-07, 550-51, 552-54, 584-85, 628, 661-62, 691-92, 707, 708-09, 714-15  
—struggle between the revolutionary and the opportunist trends in it—161-62, 552-53  
—impact of the October Socialist Revolution on its development—  
505-07, 531, 582-83, 682, 691-93, 698, 700, 714-15  
—solidarity of workers of all countries—91-92, 111-13, 395-96, 421-23, 505-07, 512, 584-85, 627-28, 629, 682, 707, 708-09  
—its prerequisites, conditions of development and forms—111-13, 505-06  
—leading role of the proletarian parties in it—255  
—significance of its experience—  
33, 76-77, 263-64, 266, 276-77, 302, 607-08, 710-11



### **REQUEST TO READERS**

**Progress Publishers would be glad to have your opinion of this book, its translation and design and any suggestions you may have for future publications.**

**Please send all your comments to 21, Zubovsky Boulevard, Moscow, USSR.**